THE HUDSON REVIEW

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The Hudson Review

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VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 1 SPRING 1955

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Notes on Contributors

Cantos 88 and 89 by EZRA POUND will be published in our Summer issue.

WYNDHAM LEWIS' next contribution to THE HUDSON REVIEW will be an article on T. E. Lawrence.

YVOR WINTERS, the noted poet and critic, is preparing an essay on 16th Century literature for this Review.

THEODORE ROETHKE, the well known poet, is on the faculty at the University of Washington.

Ikon, a book on Milton by ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS, will be published in the fall by Cornell.

JOHN FANDEL is a novice in a Benedictine monastery.

RICHARD EBERHART is Wheaton Visiting Professor of English and Poet in Residence at Wheaton College, Norton, Mass.

GEORGE EGON HATVARY is a young writer living in New York City. He is at work on a novel.

W. S. MERWIN'S poems in this issue are to be included in his third book of verse, *Green With Beasts*, to be published in England by Rupert Hart-Davis.

A new novel by ROBERT GRAVES, *Homer's Daughter*, has recently been published by Doubleday.

GEORGE McFADDEN teaches at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh. He has published an article in Spanish on Santayana; this is his first publication in English in a national magazine.

KUANGCHI C. CHANG was born near Shanghai. After first coming to this country to study architecture at Columbia, he returned to China but fled before the Communists in 1950. He has since taught History of Oriental Art at the University of Oklahoma, and is now working in an architect's office in New York. He has a special interest in Chinese poetry and is doing research towards compiling a history of the subject. His essay in this issue is his first published work in a national magazine.

R. W. FLINT, a frequent contributor to these pages, lives in Cambridge, Mass.

DONAT O'DONNELL is an Irish critic, author of *Maria Cross*, a study of imaginative patterns in a group of modern Catholic writers.

HUGH KENNER'S new book, *Dublin's Joyce*, will appear early in 1956. He was recently appointed a Contributing Editor of *Poetry*.

HERBERT GOLD'S essay, "Truth and Falsity in the Novel", will be published in an early issue of this Review.

GERALD WEALES is a member of the English Department at the Newark College of Engineering; he is at work on a book on religion in the modern English drama.

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LEUCOTHOE, by Martinelli *Gordonprint*

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Canto 86

WITH solicitude 慮

IV.xvi.18

that mirroured turbationem,
Bismarck forgotten, fantasia without balance-wheel,
"No more wars after '70" (Bismarck).
"Dummheit, nicht Bösheit" said old Margherita
(or Elenor? dowager)
"Sono tutti eretici, Santo Padre,
ma non sono cattivi."
Mind (the Kaiser's) like loose dice in a box.
Ballin said: "If I had known,
wd/ indeed have stuffed all Hamburg with grain."
Bülow believed him. But Talleyrand set up Belgium,
Two dynasties, two buffer states,
wd/ have set Poland.
So that Belgium saved Frogland; Svizzera neutral.
xvi.20: only two of us who will roll up our sleeves.
And Brancusi repeating: je peux commencer
une chose tous les jours, mais
fiiniiiir ?!

詳 hsiang[2] xvii, 7

Lost the feel of the people 靈 xviii, 5
xviii, 19

典
教
簡

way repeatedly not clean, noisy, & your hearts loveless. 22

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Get men, it will grow
Milites instar ursorum, xxiii, 5, men strong as bears
Not in two minds

ióung
touān

端

Edictorum

t'i 體

iao 要

ta seu tá hiún
tě í tá hiún (xxiv, 11)
Qui erudiet without documenta?
even barbarians who button their coats t'other way on 13

Non periturum

既

kiŭe sĭn (xxiv, 15)

心 leading to

Mencius, chi[4] (453, Mathews)
MOU WANG

穆

王 , King Mou 1001-946

repeating the

篤 tŏu

忠 tchōung

貞 tchēng

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to Kiun Ia,
3rd of his line in office:
"Their names are banner'd,
year'd on the T'ai Tch'âng 常
(the tch'âng)

"Now my turn for thin ice and tigers."
Live up to your line
and the constitution 憲
呂
etiam habitus inspiciendus
貌 mao⁴
亦
尙
一
人

It may depend on one man.
. . . as in the case of Edwardus
and von Hoesch on the telephone,
to good, for three years,
or to evil.
Eva's pa heard that on the telephone.
But forgetful of Bismarck,
lost to all
i 義 To all equity
"No wars after '70."

"Nicht Bösheit, Dummheit!"
"Sono tutti eretici, Santo Padre,
ma non sono cattivi."
It can't be all done in one language.

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"They are all prots, YR HOLINESS,
but not bad,"
Yes Yr/ Holiness, they are all of 'em prots.
"Wd/ have filled Hamburg with grain."
"No, Miss Wi'let, on account of bischnitz relations."
20 years to crush Bonaparte
Gold, thru France, into Spain,
The purchase and sale of
Geschäft,
and Buchanan's remark about monarchies
(1850 to Pierce)
mentioning only those on the Continent,
question? England not yet sold for the Suez—
That would have been 20 years later,
or was it '74?
At any rate, sold down the river,
passed over Parliament,
"whatever else he believed in,
it was not representative government"
Nor visible responsibilities.
"All that has been is as it should have been,

but what will they trust in 信 now?"

"Alla non della", in the Verona statement
οὐ ταῦτα . . . κακοῖσι
Section Rock Drill.
Alexander paid the debts of his soldiery.
They thought there was a catch in it somewhere, but he set up
the tables at camp's edge: "Any note will be paid."
OBIT apud Babyloniis
(date . . . out of Arrian).
And in the great Hammurabi Inscription:
THEY LIED.
That is the Regius Professorships
(apud Chris. Hollis)
to falsify history
and impose the Whig point of view.

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"Such hatred!"
wrote Bowers,
and La Spagnuola saying:
"We are perfectly useless, on top,
but they killed the baker and cobbler."

"Don't write me any more things to tell him
(scripsit Woodward, W. E.)
"on these occasions talks." (End quote.)

"What" (Cato speaking) "do you think of
murder?"

But some Habsburg or other
ploughed his Imperial furrow,
And old Theresa's road is still there in Belgium,
Tree-shadowed
and her thalers
were current in Africa,
standard in our time,
"characters by their coinage";
Cleopatra wrote of her coinage.
(Joseph two, verify? ploughed his furrow)
Up out of Tuscany, Leopoldine.
"We don't hate anybody."

Quoted Konody,
"We fight when our Emperor says so."
(Austrians 1914)
"Decent chaps" (Schwartz '43)
"a shame that we have to fight 'em."

"Mais le prussien!
Le prussien!
c'est un chic homme."

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Said the aged femme de menage with four teeth out.
"Vous woullez me rouller,
mais 'ous ne me
roullerez pas,
"paaasque je suis trop rosse."

(xxviii-21)

litigantium dona 非 fei

寶 paò

non coelum non in medio
but man is under Fortuna
(? that is a forced translation ?)
La Donna che volgo
Man under Fortune,
CHÊN

震

Iōu Wâng, 770 幽王

King Iou
killed by barbarians

"I 義

Houo 和

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" in angustiis me defendisti,
"Millet-wine, fragrant,
and a red bow
with a hundred arrows
and a black bow
and a hundred arrows.
Ne inutile quiescas." end quote.

"Will not rustle cattle;
will not take oxen and horses;
will close all traps and pitfalls
that they have set for wild game"

pĕ 伯

K'în 禽

order for mobilization against insurrection
by tribes from t'other side of the Houai river
in time of

TCH'ENG 成

WANG 王 King Tch'eng

1115-1078

"will not traipse into peoples' fields
chasing fugitives, real or . . . .
"in eleven days we will go into Sui,
prepare your provisions."
end quote.

"On these occasions
HE
talks."
end quote, Woodward 1936

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Eleven literates
"and I suppose Dwight L. Morrow"
re Senate enrollment
Br. . C . . . . .g
question? about '32
"hysteric presiding over it all" '39
House, Foreign Relations.

Bellum cano perenne

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Canto 87

. . . between the usurer and any man who
wants to do a good job
(perenne)
without regard to production—
a charge
for the use of money or credit.
"Why do you want to
"—perché si vuol mettere—
your ideas in order?"
Date '32
Or Grock: Où ça?
("J'ai une idée.")
Grock: Où ça?
Berchtold as if been blown up by dynamite,
Calm on the surface.
If I had known more then,
cd/ have asked him,
as Varchi—one wanting the facts.
Of Roanoke, EIGHTEEN 31:
"Nation silly to borrow its own."
Polk, Tyler, an honour roll.
Paideuma fading,
Buchanan still fairly clean,
Infantilism increasing till our time:
attention to outlet, no attention to source,
That is: the problem of issue.

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Who issues it? How?
And after the year 1600, Nakae Toji
carried Wai' Ya'
(name worn out in some dialects)
Min's lamp to Nippon.
The total dirt that was Roosevelt,
and the farce that was Churchill
(vide Grenfell re/ phoney war)
"But" said Antoninus
"Law rules the sea."
"And that the state shd/ have benefit
from private misfortune,
not in my time, not under me."
Until Salmasius, wanting precision:
Want, χρεία
"Common practice!" sd/ Ari re business;
re/ Thales' demonstration.
"Cogitatio, meditatio, contemplatio."
Wrote Ricardus, and Dante read him.
Centrum circoli.
Remove the mythologies before they establish clean values.
"Europe" said Picabia
"exhausted by the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine."
Vlaminck: ". . is local." "Art is."
The pusillanimous wanting all men cut down to worm size.
Wops, maggots, crumbled from simple dishonesty.
διάβορον . . . ἐδεστὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ φθίνει πρὸς κακοῖσι . . . . .
quia impossibile est.
Ver novum, are protected of course,
hic est medium

chih in the 3rd/ tone
and a radical.
Was not unanimous
'Αθάνα broke tie.
That is 6 jurors against 6 jurors
needed 'Αθάνα.
Right, all of it, was under Shang
save what came in Athens.
Y Yin, Ocellus, Erigena:
"All things are lights."

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Greek tags in Erigena's verses.
And when they bumped off Alexander in Babylon
that wrecked, said Gollievski, "a good deal."
Greece had no Quattrocento.
Justinian's codes inefficient
"abbiamo fatto un mucchio . . ."
(a haystack of laws on paper)
Mus. viva voce:
"We ask 'em to settle between 'em.
If they can't, the State intervenes."
They deny, of course, but it percolates,
Ocellus:
jih 日
sin 新
the faint green in spring time.
The play shaped from φλογιζόμενον
gospoda Δηάνειρα
From the dawn blaze to sunset
λαμπρὰ συμβαίνει
"What has been, should have."
"All metal as barter"
Destutt or whomso,
"Pity to stamp save by weight."
Always the undertow,
gold-bugs against ANY order,
Seeking the common (as Ari says)
practice—
for squeeze. 志
chih⁴
directio voluntatis.
"An instrument of policy
even more than a measure." Said Douglas (C. H.)
and the squirmers plunder men's mind,
wanting all men cut down to worm-size.
"A few" said Jean C.
"gros légumes."
In pochi,
causa motuum, pine seed splitting cliff's edge.

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Only sequoias are slow enough.
BinBin: "is beauty".
"Slowness is beauty."
From the

San

Ku to Poictiers.

The tower wherein, at one point, is no shadow,
and Jacques de Molay, is where?
and the "Section", the proportions,
lending, perhaps, not at interest, but resisting.
Then false fronts, barocco.
"We have," said Mencius, "but phenomena."
Monumenta. In nature are signatures
needing no verbal tradition,
oak leaf never plane leaf. John Heydon.
Σελλοί sleep there on the ground
And old Jarge held there was a tradition,
that was not mere epistemology.
Mohammedans will remain—naturally—unconverted
If you remove houris from Paradise

as to *hsin*

In short, the cosmos continues
and there is an observation somewhere in Morrison.
? leading to Remy?
Bombs fell, but not quite on Sant Ambrogio.
Baccin said: I planted that
tree, and *that* tree (ulivi)
Monsieur F. saw his mentor
composed almost wholly of light.
(Windeler's vision; his letter file
the size of 2 lumps of sugar
but the sheet legible.) Santa Teresa . . . .
Butchers of lesser cattle, their villain the grain god.

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Fell between horns, but up . . .
and the murmur: "salta sin barra."
There is no such play for a goat
Tho' Mr. Paige has described Ligurian butchery,
And the hunting tribes require some preparation.
Mont Segur, sacred to Helios
and for what had been, San Bertrand de Cominges.
"Wherever"
said Frobenius "we find these drawings, we
find water at not more than 6 feet",
And the headless clay lions leave place for the head.
Squirrils white, perhaps before a hard winter, oak cats,
Indians say: when high weeds.
As the water-bug casts a flower on stone
nel botro,

One interaction. Té 德 interaction. A shadow?

"Bomb him down. He comes up again." Said
the sergeant detailed perhaps to impress me.
"Und tey vere dhere, shentlemenn,
mit tearsz hrolling tdown dhere vaces
"Gentlemenn, shinn bones! !"
Ecstasy at a mathematical congress, ottocento.
The bone is, in fact, constructed,
according to trigonometrical whichwhat. Shinbones!
Which illustrates speech as a medium,
the problem of order.
But an economic idea will not (Mencken auctor) go into them
in less than a geological epoch.
"Nowt better than share (Mencius)
nor worse than a fixed charge."
That is the great chapter, Mencius III, 1, iii, 6
T'ang Wan Kung 上

Pu erh. "Why must say profit 利 ?"

(the grain cut.)

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No dichotomy.
Who leave the sun out of
chih 智

Religion? with no dancing girls at the altar?
REligion?
Cytharistriae.
Vide Neruda's comment,
but focus? can they even animadvert on focus?
or true editions?
or even the use of process?
"That fine old word"
sd/ "Stink" Saunders,
"An independence."

The nomignolo not reflecting on character
but at that time, 1900 or thereabouts,
applied to all professors of chemistry.
And they count on the amount of coherence,
the amount of endurance,
durations,
Henry's remarks on "dissolving view"
Should be registered.
Chiefs' names on a monument,
Seepage,
the elan, the block,
dissolution.

止

Or as Henry again: "we have, in a manner of speaking,
arrived,"
Got to, I think he says "got to, all got to."
The ubicity, ascertaining.
Was De Molay making loans without interest?
Church councils bumbling. Fanatics do not understand
interest.
Justice, directio voluntatis,
or contemplatio as Ricardus defined it in Benjamin Minor.

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Old crocks to die in a bug-house:
Gallagher (Patrick) mentioned London loans to Tibet,
an old colonel turned against masonry.
And as to what old T. F. saw in the Treasury. . . .
probably nothing.

Tigers mourn Sikandār.

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WYNDHAM LEWIS

Monstre Gai (II)

The interval between Section I of the narrative, published in the last number of THE HUDSON REVIEW, *and the present section, represents the period of a single morning. Pullman goes out early, and a young man called Sentoryen, an agent of the Bailiff, who has been waiting outside, introduces himself. Almost immediately after Pullman's return Mr. Mannock accompanies him and Satterthwaite to the State-bank, where they are supplied with a month's money. After that the two newcomers, Mr. Mannock acting as guide, visit Tenth Piazza. This is the principal shopping centre of Third City. They are here first in contact with the inhabitants. Then they return to Mr. Mannock's apartment, where they have lunch.*

THAT AFTERNOON PULLMAN OCCUPIED MAJESTICALLY the centre of the settee, and Mannock was in the large armchair he favoured, upon the inland side of the mantelpiece. Returned from the Tenth Piazza, they had lunched lightly, and afterwards Satters had flung himself like a tired dog upon his bed, greatly to their relief. The mantelpiece clock indicated that it was just after two o'clock; both men sat without speaking, but Mannock asked himself who this magnate might be who sat there before him, sought out by the Bailiff and coming from a world in which he had been Somebody, it would seem. That rather lofty something about his guest which he had noticed within ten minutes of their first meeting, and which showed no signs of disappearing, what on earth could it be? Erect and silent, Pullman gently stroked his bearded chin. What this aggressive self-confidence might signify, to this Mannock had given very little thought until now. He had not asked Pullman what had been his profession or his trade. Mannock himself had been in business in the East, mainly in China; but he did not feel that this new acquaintance of his had been a business man. No. Perhaps his calling had been clerical: but there was no clerical collar to indicate such origins, unless he had belonged to one of those sects who dispense with a uni-

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form. A surreptitious glance or two, a modification of the central image, and he decided against the beard belonging to a Preacher. That out of the way, he gave himself up to a general analysis. When you began to study him, Pullman had a noticeably impecunious look. He had not the clothes of a gentleman. If any reliance was to be placed upon the rig-out in which people make their appearance in the camp, Pullman had not come out of the topdrawer, but of some intermediate one. However shoddy he might be, the man of means would be wearing an expensive suit of clothes, or a pair of shoes made for him. One man, he remembered, had turned up at the Camp in a grey topper and formal suit to match, which, though it was rather soiled, he had no doubt been provided with in order to identify him as an Ascot and Royal-Garden-Party guest. No, Pullman's air of authority had nothing in the way of clothes to sustain it. Obviously it was in no way related to Finance.

Having reached this point in his analysis, Mannock could get on without the figure of Pullman as a guide. He marshalled in his mind a number of types with a very high opinion of themselves, but for no visible reason. Well, there was always the Actor. Quite an unsuccessful Actor would still have an inflated sense of his personal prestige. The fellow would come prancing along towards you, his head in the clouds. His wardrobe might in no way bear out his swagger. Without a bob's worth of coppers to rattle about in his pocket, this fellow was the Prince of Denmark. Mannock smiled; but his expression quickly changed. The *Beard!* —whoever saw an Actor with a beard? The Actor was a clean-shaven man, and there was no way of fitting his guest to the place reserved for men of that calling.

Then Mannock thought of the Schoolmaster. Yes, that was a possibility. The Schoolmaster often displayed a quite bloated self-esteem; and he might quite well wear a not very graceful or impressive beard. Yes. The more Mannock considered it, the more he thought that he might be in the presence of a Schoolmaster; imposingly familiar with the differential calculus, or terribly good at Greek, but not very affluent. Not a Public-School master, this fellow had not been teaching gentlemen! But there was something quite obvious which Mannock had ignored—something eminently genteel in its associations which he had passed over.

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It now rose accusingly in his memory. It was quite simply the Fag, evidently of first importance, which had been left out—that English institution of which Satterthwaite was the by no means self-effacing representative. How could he have overlooked the *fag?*

But the Wykehamist cast a dubious mind's eye towards the rugger cap worn by Satters. He knew that there were many schools called Public, but . . . and there was a *fag* wherever a Prefect whirled a cane. He would be prepared to find a fag in any institution that was Public enough to boast a "House". But whoever saw a bearded Prefect? What had happened to Pullman after the fag-owning decade? There were Other Places, he was vaguely aware, outside of those two fairylands with which Youth ends, the one watered by the Isis, bulging with learning from Jesus to All Souls; the second built upon the Cam, captured by Science, though civilising what has mastered it: but Mannock's vague awareness had no desire for greater precision. Had he made the effort, in the interest of locating his guest's pigeonhole, he might have found a Place not unknown to learning, where a Chair had once been illustriously occupied by his guest, not at all a bad niche for a rather unusual Gelehrter, within earshot of the Halle Orchestra (to give a hint of where this might be). This would not have caused the Schoolmaster Theory to be quite inapplicable; that had really rather appealed to Mannock. He had amusedly been turning this over in his mind when with an alarming suddenness, Pullman started to speak:

"On what principle," he enquired, "are people selected for citizenship in the Camp outside the City?"

"Oh, I don't know." Mannock was annoyed at his subject speaking, as an artist would be if a cow he had been drawing got up and walked away. "You yourself have been a witness of how they are selected, have you not? The Bailiff is a strange functionary. He *pretends* . . ."

With the utmost suddenness the room became as dark as night. Mannock sprang up.

"Does this often happen?" Pullman, who had not moved from his position in the centre of the settee, enquired. The voice was irritatingly steady.

"Never in my experience." Mannock sounded peevish.

A blast, rather than a flash, of lightning, a hundred times brighter and colder than any day, stamped out everything in

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blinding black and white upon the human retina. Pullman looked clearer and calmer than ever to the exasperated eye of his host. Pullman, too, had the sensation of being unspeakably distinct, but his calmness was, of course, more apparent than real. The switch-off, back to primeval night, was very violent; abruptly the vivid day ticked out. In the absence of all light, the eyes ached.

"David Hume observed that because the sun had never failed to rise every morning since the beginning of the world, that is not to say that it will do so tomorrow morning." These unhurried vocables seemed to be uttered in defiance of the blackness, and they had the same effect upon Mannock as if Pullman had personally stage-managed the turning off of the light. If his thoughts could have acquired a voice it would have been as a growl that they would have been heard. "What does the fellow think he is doing! Obviously a Schoolmaster!"

One stood, the other sat, as if posing for their portraits. Neither liked the quality of the blackness. Pullman felt he could not furnish it with his thoughts, it was impenetrable and alien. Mannock did not recognise it, he was speechless with terror.

But as if the blackness had spoken there was an enormous shock; the house they were in rocked backwards, and then with equal violence it seemed to right itself. This second movement tossed Mannock down on the floor, in front of the mantelpiece. The house then seemed to shake itself, and several of the window panes crashed, and there was a crashing and banging outside. The door was dashed open, and Satters appeared, flung himself up against Pullman on the settee, his voice blowing into the latter's face, in a breathless scream, "Pulley, wha... wha... wha... wha... what!"

Pullman, erect as he still was, was in no position to tell Satters *what*. He had no idea himself. Technically, he suffered from shock, as he would if he had been in a car and it had come into collision with a milk-float. His rigidity was a necessary adaption. Only tensed could he meet the appallingly unexpected.

He began by holding protectively Satters' bloated head, and himself derived a certain comfort from these contacts. In the end his fingers got wound round his fag's strong curls. As events developed, he found that he was pulling at a massive lock. In moments of especial stress he nearly pulled out by the roots sections of his young follower's thatch. His hand left the hair, it fastened itself on the nose snorting upon the settee at his side.

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He noticed his lips framing an apology; his hand released the nose, and Satters, apparently believing, in his shadowy consciousness, that something nightmarish had had hold of his nose, sneezed aggressively.

There were no more shocks; the next development was a world-embracing hiss. The City and everything in it became a Hiss. If a man is standing on a railway station platform near a locomotive, it is apt to emit a deafening hiss, which causes him to hurry away. Magnified a million times, such a hiss as this resulted—with Pullman's fingers sticking in his ears until later they fell down against his sides when his consciousness left him. But actually the hiss was the last thing he heard. While he sat there, his senses full of a prodigious Hiss, other sounds filled the air. Corked as his ears were, his hearing mechanism, such of it as was not obsessed by the hiss, dimly attempted to record the chaos; but the next blast was final, and it gave up all attempt to hear. Something like a Star must have been hurled at the metropolis. Or it was stunned by a rushing world. Or it was smothered by a hostile universe. If anything lived in Third City it lived as a congealed and armoured mechanism as Pullman did, his arms dropped like lead on either side of his body. He sat there bolt upright, but was not a valid witness of the hereafter.

Beneath him Mannock lay trembling on the floor, but it was an automatic rattle of his flesh, not one at which his consciousness assisted. He adhered to the floor like a piece of paper, a gasp stifled and stuck, his mouth as round as a pennypiece. Satters' head adhered to Pullman's body at about the level of the hip, like an unsightly wen of doughy texture. He was quite motionless. It was a stricken group.

During everything that happened subsequent to this, a storm of such force was present, violently rushing into every crevice, that there was not a scrap of glass left in the window-frames, and the pictures, which were hurled to the floor, also lost their glazing. The appearance of the room was entirely changed by the destructive blast, the lighter chairs and cabinets were driven into the corners of the room, the carpet rose into the air, and stopped there, except that it rested upon, here a chair, there the projecting corner of the settee. Later on Pullman discovered that he had been blown over on top of Satters, whereas Mannock's hair was almost blown out of his head, and in the end was stretched out

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to its utmost limit; a fragment of glass was embedded in his neck.

Upon this violent wind missiles of different sizes tore their way into the City; a stone, the size of a Sphinx, plunged into the tower of the Central Bank, other large stones visited the citizenry, and splintered glass, like that which had found its way into Mannock's neck, flew everywhere in and out of the houses: the wind was also responsible for transmitting a blistering heat. At times those of the inhabitants who had been practically mummified, as had the group in Habakkuk, were very fortunate, for those few who had not been rendered unconscious reported that they had been grilled alive. They said that they might have been in front of an open furnace, and they expected at every moment to be shrivelled up.

The background to the superhuman uproar, which started with flashes of lightning which were like blows from hard blades of light, the background to this was an orchestral *tutti* as of mass instruments, each straining its utmost to make more noise than had ever been made before. To supply the simile with an overseer, one might elect as *chef d'orchestre* Satan in person.

A dark cloud had stood over Piazza One; it emptied itself in the form of a spout of malodorous liquid which came down in the center of the Piazza and inundated neighbouring streets. Everyone had closed their windows, and held handkerchiefs to their noses. A doctor said that if a second cloud behaved in that way, there would be a diphtheria epidemic. This was happening in the poorer quarters of the City about the time Habakkuk was experiencing the first shocks.

The rain of Flies occurred later. The Flies were quite dead when they reached the City, and carpeted everything with a uniform blue-black. With a sound like the cymballing of thin sheets of metal, locusts followed, in lesser mass, the rain of Flies. Pullman by that time had been blown across Satters' body, and hardly a person in Third City was less of an automaton than he.

But the Waterspout, or the Deluge of Flies, was incidental. Mankind practically asphyxiated, what could only be a "Battle" took shape, at once anthropomorphic and supernatural. Its major features were the percussion of great voices, words used as missiles the size of houses, and then what the human soldier's ear would have recognised as the sounds of warfare in the Twentieth Cen-

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tury sense, so magnified as to be aurally unmanageable. The apparent slamming of monstrous doors would correspond, for those attuned to terrestrial battle, to the detonation of shells and bombs. But the doors which seemed to be slamming must have been shutting out areas as large as the City itself. Taking the sounds literally, beside the hollow roar of doors a thousand feet high, were nests of machine-guns, giving a monster rattle, a sky-scraping honeycomb with muzzles for windows. A human listener, in registering such immensities, could not possibly have admitted them to his slender auditory apparatus; he would have somehow translated the gigantic sounds into a scale more adapted to his sensual possibilities. What would not be familiar to the human soldier would be the three or four mammoth voices on high, crashing out the alphabets of Heaven and of the Pit. The nasal tongues of giant viragoes at one time conducted a screaming argument among the clouds, which, if translated, was totally absurd. This terrific contest degenerated into something like a zoological madness. The giant sounds shrank to a hubbub of monkeys, and a psittacine screaming. As abruptly as it had begun this chaotic orgasm ended—like a vast squib it hissed and spluttered, it chattered and squawked to an end, an end at which no one was present, as no one had been fully present at the never-ending encounter. What succeeded it was a silence equally monstrous.

It was in a universal silence that Pullman grew conscious of his surroundings, far more oppressive than any sounds he had ever heard. In every sense his awakening was abnormal. He did not, for instance, become aware of the conditions in which he and the others breathed and had their beings: that was a later and philosophic realisation. What first came was a feeling of a rigid body, as if frozen into an unnatural erectness. It was, as it were, a *negative* awareness: a cataloguing of things which were *not*. First of all, he could not move. Then he became aware of all the other things which he could not do. And as to the world outside himself, that mainly, to start with, was a list of negations. Everything was upside down—this was *not* here, or that was *not* there.

When he began to recover his faculties, the first sensation was one of such violence that he thought not that he was coming to life, but that he was dying. Nausea weighed him down with a

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leaden loathing. But that was secondary: his angry liver demanded how its functioning came to be shut down; the urinary system struggled to force two or three pints of liquid, or near-liquid, through the kidneys; most painful of all was the spine. What could it be? Were the meninges involved? If only ice could have been administered. He remembered the treatment he had read about in the case of some spinal ailment. Ice appeared to be essential. He wondered if Mannock possessed a refrigerator, but, even if he had, Pullman realised he was unable to move, so could not have procured any ice from that source. The reactions were so acute at this point that he fainted. When he came to, the spinal column was easier, but in the urinary region the pains were so severe that he again succumbed. When he regained consciousness for the third time the pains had diminished, he just felt sick and completely exhausted: perfectly still, his eyes shut and his hands pushed beneath his body to secure a little heat, he fell into a profound sleep. When he awakened, the organic disturbances appeared to have subsided. Absolute stillness obtained as before, not a sound was to be heard anywhere; no one seemed to be left alive in the City.

To an analytical mind such as Pullman's one of the first things to occur was the question of the time. But before the bodily ordeal began there had literally been no interval allowing for such speculations. Now he fixed his eyes upon the mantelpiece clock. He had stared at it for a very long time, when with difficulty he realised it had stopped. His next reflection was that either (a) the day was drawing in or (b) that henceforth there was going to be less light in the world. It had all been used up! he reflected stupidly. However, what could not be called an increasing *suppleness,* but was certainly a consciousness of a development all over his body of a potential pliability, began to be felt. To look directly at his wrist-watch was of course impossible. Revolving his left arm was painful enough, there was no question of lifting it up. But he found that he was able gently to withdraw his left elbow a couple of inches. Then the wrist-watch was visible. His extravagance had been justified; quietly it ticked on. It was almost five minutes to eight.

He then set about very roughly computing the time occupied by the superhuman disturbance. His guess was that for either

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two or three hours abnormal conditions had persisted. He checked this later on with many people, and his final conclusion was that what he had allowed at that time was approximately right.

Looking down he was able to see Mannock. His friend was still outstretched upon the floor, before the mantelpiece; his mouth gaped open, his hair stood erect upon his head. He also noticed, for the first time, the piece of glass embedded in the neck. How white he was! He stared at the colourless mask. The question as to whether Mannock was alive or dead must be left in abeyance until, as he put it, he himself "came unstuck".

Soon it would be too dark to see: was that delirium to be repeated when the night came? He shuddered. Would they all be annihilated before they had quite regained their physical competence? Would he die—really be dead this time: and Michael, Sentoryen and a million other "Youths", would they all be wiped out too? He was terrified as he thought of this, yet his fatalism did not desert him. He even allowed his mind to rest upon Michael, that mad giant in his furred overcoat, with his fantastic philosophy. Would he die, or would the Youth God lift him from his bed and carry him into the Elysian Fields? Someone surely would watch over this *grand halluciné*. But a cold wind began blowing through the apartment. What was this? Pullman, alone in this blasted city? . . . everyone else like these two people *dead* . . . alone, with that terrible noise, with this frantic wind? To be alone in such a storm of hatred, a supernatural rage!

His existence was ridiculous—why should he be preserved, in order to be the witness of this horror?—to lie here trembling and gasping, and in the end to be extinguished? He could only guess what was happening in other parts of the city. But he *felt*—and since there were no sounds outside it was perfectly possible—that he was the only man alive. He could not resist the sensation of an unexampled loneliness. Had he heard, all of a sudden, a step outside in the hall, it would not have occurred to him that it was a man's. His heart would freeze as he wondered what kind of creature this could be. This idea terrified him so much that he revolved his head a little and fastened his eye intently upon the handle of the door. But there was no movement and at last he forgot about it.

The wind increased to a gale, and became colder than he had

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ever expected it to be in this city. Had the city not only become derelict, all its inhabitants destroyed, but was it now to be delivered up to the colds of interstellar space? Would those fearful stars, in future, blaze down upon something as cold as themselves? His body grew colder and colder. He began to recover the use of his limbs; the necessity to secure something to cover himself up in, appeared to stimulate him to movement.

First he found he could, very slowly and painfully, move his legs, and move his feet up and down. Next came the arms, already limited movement was possible. But section by section he must learn to move his limbs in all directions. The darkness increased: soon the full night would be there. There were of course no lights in the streets, but there were also no stars. In about half an hour he was able to move freely his arms and legs; sit up for a moment and then subside again. The body was as yet rigid. It was at this point that the door opened.

He sat absolutely without movement, breathing as lightly as possible. He was still facing the fireplace, and the door was behind him. Stiff and motionless, he held his breath, pretending that, like the others, he was dead. A stealthy step crossed the room, then the approaching foot struck something in the dark.

If this was a man, it was a very silent one. Perhaps looters were at large: most of the city was dead, and looters were taking advantage of this fact. Then there were a few diminutive sounds, a sigh, a sharp scratching—a match was being struck.

There, in the brilliant matchlight, was the scared face of Platon. Pullman had never before had occasion to feel so ashamed of himself: he suddenly croaked out a laugh, Platon jumping and the match going out. Another match was produced, and once more they could see one another.

"You are alive," Platon's voice was low and husky. "Good. I thought I was the only live one—in all the city."

"I thought that too," Pullman said truthfully.

Platon burst into a feeble guffaw, and the other joined him in a doleful gasp of mirth.

Pullman sat up, in a rickety and unsteady fashion. Next he rolled over on his side and, after a number of unsuccessful attempts, managed to stand up. This had occupied four or five minutes; and when he looked down, Platon was kneeling at the

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side of his master. He had opened Mannock's shirt at the neck, and put his head sideways upon his chest. He was listening for the sound of the heart. Pullman could see where he was, but not what he was doing.

"His heart beats," said Platon.

"Good." Pullman was now doing loosening-up exercises on the sofa. He found it warmed him, too. "Capital!" he said with an attempt at a firmer voice, sitting up and slapping his arms across his chest. Then he said, "We are all alive." "All," echoed Platon. He slapped his hand upon Satters' chest. "He alive?" he asked indifferently.

"Yes," Pullman said, proceeding with his exercises.

Platon sat down beside the unmoving Mannock.

"Hot drink!" thinly blustered Pullman.

"No gas," was Platon's answer to that.

Pullman, supporting himself with pieces of furniture, reached the electric light switch.

"No electricity," echoed Platon.

Pullman opened the door, and, the palms of his hands pressed against the wall, reached a hat-rack. Two overcoats hung there: these he unhooked, and shuffled back with them into the living-room. One of them he handed to Platon. "Put this over Mr. Mannock," he said. The other he threw around his own shoulders. Then he sat down. He must learn to speak again, he told himself. Immediately he began to put words to work, organising things with the house-boy—who, though he was called a *boy*, must have been around twenty-five. The first step was to get a match struck and to look at his watch. Miraculously it still functioned, and the time, it alleged, was a few minutes past eleven. He showed it to Platon, who philosophically commented "Good! Good!" He felt, no doubt, that eleven was *good* because it might have been worse.

It was best, Pullman laid it down, that Mannock, and likewise his ex-fag, should be left alone, until such time as the gas came on again, and hot drinks could be obtained. Was it possible, he asked the boy, to block up the windows to enable them to sleep? He felt as they were doing this, and reconstructing their life again, item by item, that at any moment they might be overwhelmed like the inhabitants of Herculaneum—or even much

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more suddenly than that. However—an encouraging sign—the wind abated somewhat. Questions regarding the future presented themselves first. "The shops will have no food tomorrow—indeed, there may be no adequate supplies for some time. Has Mr. Mannock laid in any reserves? If you have stores, how long would they last?"

Sounds in the streets reached them. They both tumbled towards the windows, Pullman falling and again rising to his feet. Two loudspeakers were in neighbouring streets, but what was being broadcast it was impossible to say. But a small motor-vehicle with a very loud mechanical voice, burst into Habakkuk. It sternly shouted instructions to the citizens:

> "TO ALL CITIZENS. STOP INDOORS UNTIL THE CITY SERVICES HAVE REMOVED THE FLIES FROM THE STREETS. THEY WILL NOT BE LONG, CITIZENS! THE GAS AND ELECTRICITY IS BEING ATTENDED TO. PATIENCE, CHILDREN. PATIENCE. IT WILL NOT BE LONG, NOW!"

"Children!" grittily expostulated Platon.

"Flies!" was Pullman's response, in something between a bark and a croak.

Standing inside the windows they stood on glass splinters, and upon some blue-black substance. This had blown in when, as a dark hail, the Flies fell in the city, carpeting it with their blue-black bodies, which had been asphyxiated a thousand feet above the battlements.

Then Pullman saw that to what was left of the windows the insect blue-black was adhering. Closely packed along that part of the window-frame where the glass fitted into it, and where the wood leaves, as it were, a little shelf, were the flattened bodies of the flies. Distributed among the smaller black-bodied flies were large pallid locusts. It was these that had made a sound like tin.

Pullman returned shakily to the settee, and Platon resumed his position on the floor beside his master. As Pullman sat down, a kind of complaining wheeze was heard from Satters: and from now on Satters gave off more and more evidences of returning life. One of these was to give Pullman a heavy kick on the shin. It was about twenty minutes before Satters opened his eyes. They

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were two big wandering and alarmed baby-eyes; and then speech began: "Wha... wha... wha... what..."

"Shut up."

"Oh. Per... per... per... I say. Wha... wha... what... Pulley. Pulley."

Pullman began to feel extremely sick. He thought all that was more or less over. That of course was not the case. Irritably he grated at his budding responsibility, at his big baby. "How do you feel?"

But he did not wait to listen to the explanations of Satters. He went into the kitchen with Platon. "It will be about a couple of hours, I imagine, before the electricity and gas fitfully appear. Let us," Pullman said, "plaster up the windows of Mr. Mannock's bedroom" (for it was still extremely cold). "I suppose nothing is intact, but the curtains may only have been blown down; we could hammer them up. Refix all that, if it is there; on top of that, spare blankets must be tacked. Tin-tacks."

A bellow came from the living-room.

"As soon as the windows are fixed, I think we should carry Mr. Mannock in there, put him on the bed, and cover him up. It is still disagreeably cold."

Pullman now went towards the bellow, which had become an indignant roar. When he had first got to his feet, soon after Platon's arrival, his limbs felt as if they were made of paper. When he began to move about, they seemed to have no reality in the way of weight. "Am I," he wondered, "becoming metaphysical again?" All his physical reactions led to the formulating of such a question. For, upon their entering the City, some supernatural power had endowed Satters and himself with the full metabolism of the human body as known in their life on earth. What had apparently happened during the two terrible hours of inexplicable uproar and attack (and the very atmosphere may have been withdrawn while that was going on), was that these precarious advantages had been lost, and the gut-equipped mannikins had been degutted. The agonies Pullman had suffered were, he supposed, due to their partial reequipment. But he was far as yet from the normal young man who, with Satters, had first made the acquaintance of Mannock. He was still only a shell, a mere shadow of himself. It was as a shadow that he

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moved towards the living-room to deal as best he could with another shadow.

But he felt a little uneasy about the shadowy quality of Mr. Satterthwaite who, because of his youth, was probably fifty per cent ahead of him in recovery. However, there it was—to his ex-fag he must appear as masterfully organising everything. In a second spasm of anxiety, the question as to whether he would be strong enough to deal with Satters presented itself. He would have to lie down on the job, put up the shutters, throw up the sponge, *strike,* unless this preposterous baby quieted himself down. To make his mind work properly, he found, was nearly as difficult as it had been to gain control of his physical self: and he was not sure which it was, his mind or his body, which now seized the handle of the door and flung him inside into the room, looking tremendously tough. He addressed Satters aggressively: "What is all this about? Who told you you could blow off steam like that! Shut up, do you hear! Shut up!"

A howl of despair greeted this. Pullman sat down in the centre of the settee, as usual, his body turned towards Satters.

"Now, sir. No nonsense. Your Pulley is not himself. Nobody is his dear old self—*except you!* You are most dreadfully yourself."

An explosion of self-pitying sobs was the response to this statement of the position. Pullman moved along the settee towards Satters and smacked his face. There was enough force in this blow to shake; it administered a shock, both to the fat body and to the rudimentary psychology. The former fag put his hand up to his cheek, and there came a sound like a deep *ooo.* The eye above the *ooo* was full of sullen anger.

"I did that to see if you could move your arms. You can. Are your legs equally movable?" He pinched the nearest of the fat legs, a really vicious compression. Satters jumped ostentatiously. "You beastly cad! Pulley, you are a beast to pinch me like that!"

Pullman stood up.

"Can you stand up?" he demanded.

He got a grip on Satters, such a grip as you would get on the front of a footballer, and succeeded in pulling him off the sofa. "Now stand up, you lump of dough! Up! On your feet!"

Pullman felt so abominably sick after these exercises, that he

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moved away in the direction of the door. Satters, collapsed upon the settee, followed him with a big reproachful eye.

"Come with me to the lavatory! Do you want to urinate? Come with me. Quick!"

He left the room, and hurried to the water-closet. As soon as he reached it he catted: then stood anticipating other spasms—feeling washed-out and empty, but propping himself against the wall, as he gazed down into the pan. Soon there was a heavy blundering step; next the doorway behind him was filled with a glaring, bedraggled, but obviously incontinent, schoolboy.

"I say, Pulley. . . !"

Pullman, the colour of a very green apple, backed away from the pan, and roughly changed places with the other. "Go on. You are more important than I am." He left Satters inside, shutting the door.

That was the end of it as far as Pullman was concerned. He was good for nothing except a bed, he had literally nearly killed himself over the revival of Satters. But Satters had been brought to life and put upon his feet. He had wound up Satters, he was ticking again. Falteringly he made his way to his bedroom, shook the dead flies off his bed and subsided upon it.

It was three hours later that Platon wakened him. *Gas* was the word he heard. Subduing extreme fatigue, he rose and went to the bathroom. Before he reached the bathroom Platon appeared. The houseboy's face had a different look—it was somehow bellicose—but, that apart, he was utterly jaded, and to say that he was in need of sleep would have been a criminal understatement. Mannock, he explained, had shifted a good deal, and groaned, but so far he had not opened his eyes.

Pullman went to the kitchen with Platon, where some coffee was being made. As they went he said shortly, "Mr. Satterthwaite?" The houseboy poked a disrespectful finger in the direction of the living-room. Washed and dressed, he went in where Satters was sleeping, upon the settee (a sign of quite extraordinary displeasure on Satters' part to be lying here, preferring the settee to a bed within whispering distance of his master). Pullman gazed down at the snoring fag, but Satters refused to wake up.

"Coffee!" shouted Pullman. "Eats! In Mannock's room." He left him there, and went back to do for Mannock what he had for Satters. Satters, however, had no intention of being out of it. Soon he could be heard evacuating the living-room; and next,

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there he was, sleepily scowling, rubbing his eyes with the back of his hand, and picking his nose. The masterful one stood gazing down upon the sick man. Ignoring Satters, he went out of the room; in a few minutes he returned with Platon at his side, who placed a tray of coffee near the bed. Platon had painted with iodine the incision where he had removed the piece of glass from Mannock's neck; he had also, with great difficulty, forced the hair to lie down. As Pullman watched, the sleeper's shoulder moved convulsively and the face turned upwards on the pillow.

Pullman again bent over the oldest and by far the most seriously affected of them. "Mannock, Mannock," he said loudly and emphatically, squeezing his arm and patting it. Within five or ten minutes Mannock was lying with his arms stretched out on either side, and slowly and painfully speaking. "Hallo. Has that terrible noise stopped? I should like to know. . ." He stopped and struggled to piece together several words in an orderly way. "Is he safe . . . Padishah?" Pullman told him (without any justification) that the Padishah luckily had been spared. "Stanfield . . . all right?"

Pullman had not the least idea who Stanfield was, but he answered firmly, with the ring of truth: "Stanfield is in excellent shape."

His mind put at rest as to the well-being of the Padishah and of Stanfield, Mannock settled himself, closed his eyes, and went to sleep. It was as if he had asked, a look of morbid anxiety in his eyes, "How is His Majesty the King?"—and having been assured that His Majesty had never been better, had sunk into a restful sleep. But Pullman wakened him again and pressed him to drink a cup of coffee. "It tastes like molten lead!" the patient whispered, pushing away the cup. But Pullman insisted that he should go on drinking the molten lead. This ordeal appeared to have made him a little wakeful. Satters, grimacing, was attempting to drink his coffee. Pullman sat down and proceeded to do the same thing. For all of them this was a mysterious and semi-solid liquid. Satters went to the bathroom to vomit, but Pullman seemed almost to be returned to his normal self.

His voice was stern. "Is what we have suffered of frequent occurrence here?" he enquired of Mannock.

Mannock began shaking his head with such emphasis as he could muster. "No, no, no . . . Never before."

Pullman gave his beard a stroke, and emitted a deep, a very

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deep and dubious "Ah!" Then suddenly he asked, "What does this mean, Mannock?"

Mannock looked frightened. "I do not know. Really, I do not know."

"If you do not *know*, Mannock, what do you *suppose?*"

Mannock raised his eyebrows a little piteously. "Nothing at all . . . absolutely . . . I am a spectator . . . like yourself."

"I am sorry you do not feel strong enough to give a guess," Pullman observed almost disagreeably. "I should have thought that however rotten you felt, you would have a dim speculation or two about this awful business."

The invalid seemed about to cry. But instead, making an effort, he remarked fairly audibly, "One thing is clear enough . . . Satan is the culprit . . . Beyond that, I have no idea as to what was going on."

Satters, who had returned, and resumed his seat, lost a few shades more of his robust colour. "Satan," he repeated in an awed whisper.

"The Devil," Pulley told him contemptuously.

"The Der . . . Der . . . the Der . . ."

"Yes. The Devil," Pullman barked, "and you will soon find yourself in Hell, and some gluttonous demon will be cooking you in a pot. He will regard you as a tender morsel."

A look of unmitigated terror appeared in Satters' face.

"Pul . . . Pul . . . Pul . . ."

Pullman looked at him.

"Per . . . Pulley! Are you serious? Do you really think . . . ?"

Pullman stood up, went over to Mannock and patted him gently, saying: "Now you must go to sleep again. I am sure we shall all be alive tomorrow, and possibly the next day. The only one I am anxious about is Satters. He *is* such a great fat tender morsel."

Obtaining some extra blankets from Platon, Pullman and Satters went to their beds. A wind sprang up again, but of a normal type, a little blusterous and with some rain. The glassless windows made it necessary for them to put their heads under the bedclothes. In spite of these conditions, Pullman was asleep almost as soon as he had lain his head upon the pillow. The last thing he was conscious of was the sound of chattering teeth from the bed of the terrified Satters. . . .

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Five days elapse. During that time the principal occurrence is a visit to a select cafe, and an even more select club, by Mr. Mannock and his two temporary guests. On the way they inspect the body of an enormous flying dragon, shot down during the Blitz on "Black Tuesday".

After lunch, Pullman was invited to come down to Fifth Piazza. "About three o'clock," Mannock told him, "there is to be a deputation from Hades. They are sending a little party of diabolical diplomats."

"Is this quite usual?" asked Pullman.

Mannock sighed. "Most unusual," he protested. "In fact, I should not have said that it was possible for such a deputation to come here at all, certainly not at such short notice. However, there it is. A delegation from the enemy who was responsible for that frightful rumpus four days ago is to meet the home team in a display of open diplomacy. It is, I think, rather a good sign."

They travelled by underground, and eventually came to the surface at one end of Fifth Piazza, a very large open space, only smaller than Tenth Piazza. Like the latter it was paved and arcaded. It had the same bare impressiveness: the houses, of not more than three storeys, were coloured a uniform café-au-lait. The crowd was dense; half of it knew why it was important to be there, and this was the Catholic half; the other half had not the vaguest idea what this spectacle might mean. The center of the Piazza was roped off, and along the inner side was a continuous line of armed police. Pullman noticed several truck-loads of civil guards stationed near the corner of the Piazza (for the entrance to the underground was happily not far from the area where the meeting was to take place). The excitement of the non-catholic half was not less intense because of their complete lack of interest in what was at stake. As this was the vocal half, where Pullman and Mannock were it seemed a solid thronging of idiots. "What *is* Hell, Bert?" or "Does the old Devil smoke cigarettes?" Pullman heard one man say to another. "I've been 'ere a hundred years and never saw a devil, have you, Ernest?" The other said: "Are you *that* old, Arthur?"

There was a loud explosion. The crowd received this with a gasp, pressing tightly up against the ropes, with a deeply drawn

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"Oh!" The infernal contingent advanced with a dancing step along the Piazza to the appointed meeting-place. That was exactly in front of where Mannock and Pullman were standing; they edged their way to the front, but had their toes trodden on and found themselves in unsavoury proximity to a stunted rabble, determined to see, and resenting the toffishness of Mannock. Straight in front of them, and not distant more than a couple of dozen paces, was the home team: it was beautifully blond and clean, two lines of uniformed men, carefully chosen from the police for their blue eyes and flaxen hair. One was almost white, he was so fair. Standing in front of these picked men was one of the hundred personal companions of the Padishah. He was a very tall and muscular young man, and looked extremely angry. The eyes of the beauty chorus behind him were fixed upon the horrible throng advancing against them, and they did not look better pleased than their chief.

As the diabolical contingent drew near, exclamations of horror arose all the way down the line. "Are they yewman?" asked a spectator standing between Pullman's legs. "I'm buggered if I know," the man stationed between Mannock's legs expressed his ignorance. Mannock bristled. "How shameful! I know I shall be sick in a minute," came from him. Pullman trembled; he was silent.

To a roar of fear, of disgust, of half-human cries, snorts and gasps, advanced pirouetting the double line of demons hoofed and horned, frisking and cavorting, ogling and grimacing, and, not by any means least, emitting the most revolting stench. This assailed the noses of all the spectators, however far away, the moment they made their appearance. As they advanced, with every step they stank more, and the smell developed intolerably.

"What a ghastly sight!" Pullman muttered to his companion; "and oh my God, what a smell! Nothing human stinks like that."

Their leader was a man. He was large and powerful, extremely dark, his face appearing to be discoloured. Stepping very quickly, he strode up to his opposite number, until their faces were a foot apart. A very elegant summer suit and brown shoes seemed to constitute him a man born of woman, though his countenance was so charged with evil that if he had walked along a city street in London or New York he would have been arrested at sight. He appeared to spit some words towards the face of the angel,

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and the other shook from head to foot with rage, but glared without speaking.

The crowd everywhere had recoiled a few feet, but the armed police stood their ground.

The infernal contingent eyed, sideways and slit-faced, the onlookers as they passed them; these monstrous, sideways, half-men were throughout naked—except that you would not call them that, any more than you would use such a word regarding an elephant, or a kangaroo, or an ape. Not that they belonged to an unmixed type; they had the smiles of inexpressibly loathsome men, but they stamped upon hoofs which were purely animal. Purely animal were their powerful, oily and hairy legs. Their arms and hands were disagreeably human; except that the top of the arm, like the breast, was covered in thick hair; the head was a mystery—the face was that of a very large goat, but it had many human attributes. Most enigmatic of all were the messages which darted from and smouldered in the elongated eyes.

Nearest to the spectators was a hoofed creature, with a human face goatish and leering. His penis and his tail had the appearance of being a continuous organ, the tail growing out of the body at the rear exactly opposite the place where the penis issued from the body in front, arching downwards as did the tail. The nipples hung from the breasts, like corkscrews, and two short horns sprouted out from the scaly forehead. This man of hoofs kept sliding his eyes around at the spectators, and suddenly he thrust out a hooked tongue, which protruded almost a foot from his face.

"Oo, did you see what the bastard did?"

" 'Ere, 'Arry, did you see 'im, boy!" A head shot about looking for Harry.

In the second rank of the infernal animals was one with so goatish a countenance that his curving nose constituted almost all of the profile of his face. In his case the penis was erect, but curved upwards like an inverted red hook.

All the twenty, prancing, shuffling, swaying backwards and forwards, chattering, starting, laughing, snarling, grimacing incarnations of evil, were never at rest for a moment. One of them lifted his tail and excreted. Another pissed.

As they drew up behind their leader, in two tumultuous lines, one or two of them protruded their tongues at the line of blonds

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in front of them. One turned his back and farted. Several of the beauty chorus held handkerchiefs to their noses, which provoked hilarity in the infernal ranks.

Pullman was fascinated by the abnormally brooding and violent expression of the man detailed to command these monsters at his back. He watched him as he stood there, wondering if he would deliver his message verbally or in writing. He did not have to wait long for the answer. Both Mannock and himself could hear every word with perfect distinctness. What, using a byronic formula, one might call respectively His Darkness and His Lightness gazed into each other's eyes with such an infinity of hatred on both sides that Pullman wondered how they could stand so still. The hatred that came from Hell was a steady withering stream of fire, whereas the angelic rejoinder was disposed to flash indignantly.

The first words came from the darker of the two.

"You know what I am here for, Goody-two-shoes!" he hissed in the other's face.

At these words the large blond countenance erupted. A furious response burst out of it on the instant, the big red lips farting the vocables out. "Pot-boy for boiling the damned in tar, what would you come for? Travelling for your dung-shop, is that it?"

He from Hell affected dignity. "I am a bearer of an order from my chief. You—all of you—are to leave this place immediately. We order you to get out of this place without delay, and go back where you came from. Silly little song-birds of Jesus. This city is of no use to you. What do you do with it? Nothing that anyone can see. You pray all day, and leave it to the Bailiff to manage. We can make better use of it than you, so hand it over, or rather vacate it, the whole hundred of you. If you do not we shall come here in very great force, and make an end of you."

"Is that all you have to say? And is it as an advertisement for your perfume that you bring with you those foul animals?"

The devil's envoy leered back, a long obscene leer. "No, I brought them to shock your sensibilities. Disgusting, isn't it?"

"You should have come like that yourself, instead of dressing up as you have. It was out of respect for me, I suppose. Have you anything else to say?"

"There are many things I could say . . . about your blond beauty chorus, for instance . . . I could say a lot about them."

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The big blond face in front of the demonic leader was again convulsed, subject apparently to sudden rages. His voice flew up into the highest register.

"We far prefer to be the opposite of what you like, Beelzebub's bottle-washer . . . you little fetch-and-carrier for that Smell in Hell . . . sucker-up-to-of-Satan."

"You . . . You choir-boy of that Humbug in Heaven, you tuneful appendage of that pompous old egomaniac . . . the Almighty Sod—beg pardon, God."

What these two figures were saying to one another could be heard a long way away, and in any case all over the Piazza it was obvious that a "row" was beginning. Everyone began to rush towards the center of disturbance, and an avalanche descended upon Mannock and Pullman.

"I am glad you are here! I shall be able to shelter behind you." Shouting into Mannock's ear, Pullman grimaced.

"I don't advise you to. I am not a very solid wall." A genuine alarm was visible in Mannock's face, mingled with a snobbish distaste for ending his days beneath the feet of a proletarian horde. He began to look around indignantly for police protection. "Where *are* the Police Officers?"

As their pugnacity developed, to the amazement of everybody these two six-footers grew to be seven-footers, and the seven-footers grew to be eight-footers, and so on. The spectacle of these two carnival figures roaring at one another, standing so high above the surrounding people that nobody now looked anywhere except at these two miraculously growing men, had turned the meeting into something even more stupefying; and Pullman noticed that there was a deepening hush of expectancy at their end of the Piazza. What was going on in people's minds? Obviously the advent of that fear which must accompany a miracle.

A roar of such volume came from the blond giant as to strike terror in the crowd, many of whom began to edge away. The huge words crashed out in the air like a supernatural demonstration.

"Demon!" it began, and had a terrible echo. "Demon, I will crush you like a fly! Impudent black bug! I will annihilate you on the spot. Hell-bird, you will regret the day you brought your filthy troop to this city."

Hell's envoy struck the other on the face, and the blow was

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a climax of alarm. There was a smothered *Ooo* among the spectators: the police who lined the square made ready their arms. Quite half the people near Mannock and Pullman had disappeared, and the others stood with white awe-struck faces.

"If they begin fighting—and *growing*," Pullman whispered to Mannock, "we shall all be trampled under foot."

The blond giant returned the blow, and both the escort of demons, and the blond followers of the Padishah's sprouting envoy, scuttled to the rear to avoid being trodden on. But the giants were now firmly fastened together, rocking about from side to side. Such panted remarks as "T-t-take your claws away from my throat," or "Blast you, I will tear your eyes out," could be heard, in the midst of enormous breathing and threatening grunts.

Pullman had noticed long before this that both giants had kicked off their shoes, which lay, very minute footwear, not far from where their feet were moving. Their clothes had everywhere burst asunder. But it was at this moment, that, with enormous splutters and gasps, they suddenly levitated. With the little garments of a mere six-footer, none of them intact, hanging from them in loops and wisps, two vast nudities rose into the air and disappeared over the roofs. But they made their exit buttocks uppermost. Hell was on top, as they rose out of the Piazza. Hell's messenger protruded against the azure sky an anchovy-coloured balloon. But this was immediately succeeded by an upsurge of pink limbs, of enormous size, climbing up on top of the darker element; and that is how they actually vanished behind the roofs, a picture in pink, wine-brown, and azure, the last things seen being three or four violently agitated feet, pink feet and brown feet, the stiff tumbling spikes of twenty toes signalling the agitation beneath. For those who still watched, with great excitement, the vanishing of the aerial combatants, there was a sequel in a very few minutes. Seemingly a considerable distance beyond where the agonized feet had vanished, the two figures, grown enormously in size, reappeared, locked together in a mad embrace, and aimed upwards towards the sun, the moon, and the stars. The light figure had now, springing out of its shoulders, prodigious wings, stretched to their utmost length, and dazzling white, whereas the dark figure protruded wings of a smaller size, dark and bristling.

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Blood dripped from both, and splashed down among the markets near First Piazza, so it was learned later on. But there was a third figure of the white persuasion—an enormous full-sized angel, rising into the sky beyond the moat.

It was obvious at once that the diabolic intruder had seen this third figure, because an intensive struggle began between the two original antagonists; the dark one was tearing himself away from the embrace of the white. Almost at once the severance was effected, and a huge black figure dashed away, over the roofs, coming down, it was reported later on, in Tenth Piazza; grown smaller already, he made a crash landing near the centre of the Piazza, rolling over and over like a parachutist reaching the earth at the end of a drop of considerable depth. Then he was seen to spring into the air, and land upon a balcony above the long arcade. There he crouched, getting smaller and smaller as the people watched him, and then there was a loud report, and he was covered in what was described as a little cloud, like that caused by many forms of explosion. When the smoke cleared away, this combatant, the dark one, had disappeared. Above the Piazza the two white angels had flown circling round over the crouching black figure; when their enemy evaporated, they turned and flew in a wide circle over the city, and were last seen circling down towards the enormous barracks, at the moat-side, where the hundred angels had their post. The wounded one was still bleeding as he flew. And that was the last that was seen or heard of this supernatural combat.

Pullman stood back exhaling noisily. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," he said, as if to himself. Mannock was about to reply when he seemed to change his mind. He continued to gaze up into the sky, apparently displeased. The crowd stood uncertainly as if in a dream. Everyone began looking at everyone else, some with a smile. But a new event took the place of the old. There was a fresh roar from the crowd, as two of the animals sprang upon one of the blonds in front of them, and dragged him over beneath their hoofs. Then they proceeded to tear him to pieces, rolling him over and over, and both of them scratching his face and neck. The blond was screaming, and, at the sight of the blood, the neighbouring crowd began a violent demonstration. However, several of his fellow-blonds rushed in to rescue him.

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This they had partly succeeded in doing, but with the result that the entire body of goatish men and beautiful young policemen were at each others' throats.

It was a lorryful of troops, which was parked immediately above the station-entrance, who first saw in detail what was happening. Pullman was nearly thrown to the ground by an onrush of armed men. Jumping over spectators lying in their path, the troops swarmed through the police barrier and at once the sounds of rifle-fire mingled with the screams and groans of the combatants. But quite half of the animals had withdrawn from the struggling mass. They huddled together, showing every sign of alarm and anxiety. They chattered to one another, casting fearful glances over their shoulders, and moving a little towards the centre of the Piazza. Two Police blasts sounded, and on the other side of the Piazza the Police advanced from where they were standing in front of the onlookers. About a dozen, with rifles drawn at the ready, bore down upon the uncertain group of animals, helped them to make up their minds which way to go, and also determined for them what speed they should adopt for their withdrawal.

Meanwhile the confused battle proceeded where a few more aggressive animals were leading the attack on the blonds; but now the troops were attempting to pick off as many of their infernal visitors as possible. "Crack-crack, crack-crack," went the rifles, and with a howl of unearthly pain an animal would fall to the ground. The blond casualties who had been pulled out of the mêlée by the Police were in an awful condition; Pullman noticed in one case, that the young man had had his trousers forced open and his sex had been literally torn from his body. Then, as though obeying a signal, with great abruptness the animals broke off where they were fighting, attempting to disengage themselves. Quite suddenly they appeared very anxious that the battle should terminate. Dragging their casualties after them, they began gliding away, in some cases clutching up the wounded, carrying them in their arms like enormous babies.

The Civil-Guards who had been engaged, though merely as snipers, in the mêlée, at once stepped back allowing the animals to join their main body without molestation. As to the blonds, more bitterly and totally engaged with their demonic opposites,

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as if by magic relieved of the necessity of fighting, they stepped back too, all more or less seriously wounded. Like a number of big schoolboys, they walked or hobbled back to where their lines had been, comparing notes, showing one another bitten fingers, scratched faces, and, in one case, Pullman noticed, a quite severe eye-injury. Some looked back towards the casualties who lay in a neat row, being given first aid by the Police. Pullman heard one say: "The filthy bastards nearly did in old Albert."

The attention of Mannock and Pullman had, up to now, been fully occupied. They looked at one another simultaneously, smiling as they did so.

"What was the meaning of that remark of yours . . ."

"About being a Christian?" Pullman interrupted him.

Mannock nodded his head, saying, "Yes. I see you remember."

"Mannock, we have witnessed a miracle! People in this City disappear into the sky, two or three times their normal size . . . and I see live devils in front of me, not many yards away." And he crossed himself.

"A most confirmed disbeliever would publicly beg your pardon," Mannock agreed.

"That is what I must do," Pullman sighed. "But I must do so to a priest."

"Do you know where the Catholic Cathedral is to be found? It is just at the farther end of this Piazza."

"Thank you," Pullman said.

The hostility of the crowd increased, which seemed to entertain the demons. With girlish giggles, and splutters of laughter, some of the demonic creatures were chattering together, evidently saying the equivalent of "What a game! What shall we do next?" But the majority were more serious, visibly uneasy. They all were moving about without ceasing, in a kind of St. Vitus's dance. At the sound of revolver shots fired in the air by two officers of the police, several of them sprang up for nearly the height of their bodies. It was in a less orderly group—with shrill noises, and stamping and scuffling, frisking and pirouetting, some of them ogling the crowd as they passed—that they reached the spot where they had first alighted. Then there came a kind of crack, like the sound of an enormous whip, and the next moment that part of the Piazza was filled with a dense bituminous smoke. When it

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had cleared, the fiends, both casualtied and intact, were no longer there. Everyone was choking and spitting where they were near enough to be affected by the smoke added to the bodily stench of the animals. The police had begun clearing the square, and driving the remainder of the crowd before them into the side-streets. Pullman and Mannock themselves took the way of the Underground, Pullman muttering, "Yes, let us get home. I have a great deal to think about."

On the return journey they did not say very much to one another. Back in the living room they appeared somewhat taciturn also. Very soon Platon brought tea, and after they were refreshed, Mannock spoke.

"I really do not know what is happening here. The man we saw disappear into the sky—I mean the blond one—I have met and talked to a dozen times. He was a very pleasant fellow; not much to say for himself, but as gentle as a lamb. To watch him growing in size until he towered over the Piazza, to hear him roaring out words which a kitchen scullion might envy, and this speech so magnified in volume that it shook the whole of the enormous square, and lastly to see him, practically naked, disappearing into the sky, locked in the arms of a ghastly demon from Hell, is not the kind of thing I ever expected to see in this City. What would we have said in our former life in London, say, if we saw the Queen growing larger and larger until she was as tall as Buckingham Palace; if we saw her take flight, shouting curses at her Chamberlain, or perhaps at the Prime Minister—who also started to become unnaturally large, until his head appeared above the houses in Downing Street. What would our sensations be?"

"We should be justifiably amazed," Pullman declared. "But it is a thing which could never happen, because we are mere mortals, the Queen as much as ourselves. Now here, it is a different matter. You must allow me to say that you have made a mistake. Those are supernatural personages, our rulers here. You have tended, I feel, to treat them too much as if they were the King and Queen. All the time that you were talking to that Immortal (whom we have just seen in his proper rôle) you should have expected him to fly out of the window or up into the sky."

Mannock threw himself back in the chair where he was sitting, his face a battlefield of very disturbing emotions. Looking at

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Pullman with displeasure, he answered him in the following way: "Thank you for your lecture. I am most obliged to you for pointing out my shortcomings. But I am a very simple man who takes things and people as he finds them, and is not gifted with second sight."

Pullman saw at once that he had made a bad mistake, and that with so conventional a man as Mannock a much milder and duller attitude was essential. He had been very much excited by the spectacle in Fifth Piazza. But so had Mannock, as was shown by his own imaginary picture of a gigantic Queen. Yes, but because Mannock had been betrayed into swollen and fantastic imagery, the temptation to talk big in reply should have been resisted.

"Ah well," and Pullman laughed, as he moved freely about upon the settee, "I am afraid I have been rather intoxicated by what I have seen. The scent of Hell is an aroma which does not suit me. The way I look at this afternoon's events is quite different from you. I am stupefied by the miraculous. All my life I was a sceptic. And now I see that I was very short-sighted. The miraculous here is the most common or garden of things: for men (whom we are able to meet socially) are literally walking miracles. I should not be in the least astonished if tomorrow Jesus Christ appeared in Third City: I should merely bow my head. If I heard the voice of God I should not be surprised."

There was a pause during which Pullman observed that all the anger had left Mannock's face, and he was considering what his friend had said to him. His face was so mobile, and expressed his thoughts in such a stylish way, that it might be described as a very charming factor in the make-up of this very simple man. After a little Mannock began to speak in a voice that was completely changed.

"You know, Pullman, I am, I am afraid, a very worldly fool. You have opened my eyes to what I should have seen, instead of the quite dull things which I did see. I can't tell you how gratefull I am. I might never have realised this if we had not been together in Fifth Piazza, and if we had not had this conversation afterwards."

His eyes were misted with tears as he looked over at the bearded figure, who, in a few words, had shown him the vast importance

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of what had occurred. They both sat in silence for some time, Mannock eagerly conning over the backgrounds of this revelation. Of God he had always been mystically aware . . . that is, when he was in a beautiful church and the organ was playing some terrific piece; but at other times this awareness shrank to something that he found it impossible to think of except as a cold abstraction: but *now* he had seen with his own eyes the great Mazdean Principles of Light and Dark, of the Good and the Bad, locked in a fearful embrace, disappearing into the sky. And what had he been thinking of a short while after that? He had been thinking of the indecorous behaviour of one of the leading figures in the ruling caste of the City—of something *that was not done*, or *was not said*. He felt very humble, but he also felt very elated.

He rose and stretched, saying, "I am not quite up to these revelations. I think I will go and lie down for a little."

"I should, if I were you," Pullman told him. "I feel rather shattered myself." He stood up. "I think I will go and have a wash to start with. I may have forty winks."

They smiled at one another, and Mannock went to his room, Pullman to the lavabo.

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YVOR WINTERS

At the San Francisco Airport

To J. W., 1954

This is the terminal: the light
Gives perfect vision, false and hard;
The metal glitters, deep and bright.
Great planes are waiting in the yard—
They are already in the night.

And you are here beside me, small,
Contained and fragile, and intent
On things that I but half recall—
Yet going whither you are bent.
I am the past, and that is all.

But you and I in part are one:
The frightened brain, the nervous will,
The knowledge of what must be done,
The passion to acquire the skill
To face that which you dare not shun.

The rain of matter upon sense
Destroys me momently. The score:
There comes what will come. The expense
Is what one thought, and something more—
One's being and intelligence.

This is the terminal, the break.
Beyond this point, on lines of air,
You take the way that you must take;
And I remain in light and stare—
In light, and nothing else, awake.

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THEODORE ROETHKE

All the Earth, All the Air

1.

I stand with standing stones.
The stones stay where they are.
The twiney winders wind;
The little fishes move.
A ripple wakes the pond.

2.

This joy's my fall. I am!—
A man rich as a cat,
A cat in the fork of a tree,
When she shakes out her hair.
I think of that, and laugh.

3.

All innocence and wit,
She keeps my wishes warm;
When, easy as a beast,
She steps along the street,
I start to leave myself.

4.

The truly beautiful,
Their bodies cannot lie:
The blossom stings the bee.
The ground needs the abyss,
Say the stones, say the fish.

5.

A field recedes in sleep.
Where are the dead? Before me
Floats a single star.
A tree glides with the moon.
The field is mine! Is mine!

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6.

Fools and madmen can make
Lovely uncommon song;
Neither madman, nor fool,
I linger in this joy,
My sigh half a song.

7.

In a lurking-place I lurk,
One with the sullen dark.
What's hell but a cold heart?
But who, faced with her face,
Would not rejoice?

The Song

1.

I met a ragged man;
He looked beyond me when
I tried to meet his eyes.
What have I done to you?
I cried, and backed away.
Dust in a corner stirred,
And the walls stretched wide.

2.

I went running down a road,
In a country of bleak stone,
And shocks of ragged corn;
When I stayed for breath, I lay
With the saxifrage and fern
At the edge of a raw field.

I stared at a fissure of ground
Ringed round with crumbled clay:
The old house of a crab;
Stared, and began to sing.

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3.

I sang to whatever had been
Down in that watery hole:
I wooed with a low tune;
You could say I was mad.

And a wind woke in my hair,
And the sweat poured from my face,
When I heard, or thought I heard,
Another join my song
With the small voice of a child,
Close, and yet far away.

Mouth upon mouth, we sang,
My lips pressed upon stone.

The Beast

I came to a great door,
Its lintel overhung
With burr, bramble, and thorn;
And when it swung, I saw
A meadow, lush and green.

And there a great beast played,
A sportive, aimless one,
A shred of bone its horn,
And colloped round with fern.
It looked at me; it stared.

Swaying, I took its gaze;
Faltered; rose up again;
Rose but to lurch and fall,
Hard, on the gritty sill,
I lay; I languished there.

When I raised myself once more,
The great round eyes had gone.
The long lush grass lay still;
And I wept there, alone.

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ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

Taste and Bad Taste in Metaphysical Poetry: Richard Crashaw and Dylan Thomas

I WILL START WITH THREE AXIOMS about metaphysical poetry, none altogether self-evident, but all distinct enough, I think, to be worth testing against a metaphysical poet of the seventeenth century and one of the twentieth. The distinctive effects of metaphysical poetry are built upon conflict, opposition, tension; metaphysical poets often exploit a "dissociation of sensibility" (even though they disapprove of it), to achieve the effect of tension; one effect of this exploitation may be the disruption of those harmonies which one sometimes supposes necessary to a unified esthetic effect.

What adjustment do these considerations require in the standards by which one judges the esthetic achievement of a metaphysical poem? Mr. Merritt Hughes, in the course of his eloquent protest against the kidnapping of Donne by modern critics, took a number of grounds against making the wit of Donne a touchstone for the judgment of all poetry—among others, the interesting one that Donne's wit led him into certain faults of taste. While glancing back to Dr. Johnson and John Dryden, Mr. Hughes made primary reference to Professor Grierson's 1912 deprecation of the epicedes and obsequies, and to his tentative critique of the coarser and more cynical of the love poems. "There is bad taste in some of Donne's work"[1]—no doubt. But how much, where, relative to what standard of good taste, and is the wit responsible for it? To develop a few misgivings about the generalization, one need look no further than Grierson's Introduction or Johnson's *Life of Cowley*. Professor Grierson quotes as a model of subtle, pure, and lovely verse a poem by the then laureate, which simply has not stood the test of forty years. It is an atrocious piece of mawk, even

[1]M. Y. Hughes, "Kidnapping Donne", *California Essays in Criticism*, second series, IV, 63. The following editions of the poets were used in this essay: Donne, *Complete Poems*, ed. Grierson; Crashaw, *Poems*, ed. A. R. Waller; Thomas, *Collected Poems*. Page references immediately following quoted passages are to these editions.

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by laureate standards. Does this poem represent the standard by which Donne was condemned? Pure its diction may be, though the idea of "unrisen lustres" slaking the "o'ertaken moon" is a queer one indeed; but subtle and lovely it is not; and if it is a deficiency in Donne not to have written in this way, we may be well on the way to confusing Ella Wheeler Wilcox with William Shakespeare. As for Dr. Johnson, though much of his critical attack concerns Cowley and some genuinely unfortunate mortuary poems by Donne, his blame also falls unerringly on the one image of Donne's which recent critics have most generally praised. Of the compass-image at the end of *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* he can only say that he does not know whether ingenuity or absurdity predominates. This thundering dictum leaves us pretty much at a stand; when we start looking for "bad taste" in metaphysical poetry, where shall we stop, where draw the line? Where indeed shall we begin?

To start with Dr. Johnson, who is a good, explicit point of departure, it is true, as he says, that the faults of metaphysical poetry can often be laid to a striving for effect. But several subdivisions of the crime may be distinguished. The poet perhaps aims at an effect perfectly proper, even sublime, in itself, but of which he falls lamentably short; or he perhaps strives to dazzle the reader with pyrotechnics either irrelevant to the form or improper to the nature of poetry; or else, perhaps, he undertakes to render a discord which is grotesque in character or proportions. Johnson seems to have followed Dryden in having the second variety of sin chiefly in mind. "Donne affects the metaphysics," says Dryden in the *Discourse Concerning Satire*, "not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should ingage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love." The point is simply that Donne pursued effects inappropriate to the genre or the situation. There is an imputation, even, that metaphysics would be all right in satire, or in poems which had the overall intent of making the reader think. But Johnson goes a step further by declaring "that whatever is improper or vicious [among the metaphysicals] is produced by a voluntary deviation from nature in pursuit of something new and strange; and that the writers fail to give

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delight, by their desire of exciting admiration."[2] They are, in other words, pursuing an objective which is poetically wrong in general. Johnson grants that "where scholastic speculation can be properly admitted, their copiousness and acuteness may justly be admired"; but this area does not seem to coincide, in any degree, with that of poetry. For nature (which, though it includes feelings as well as thoughts, is general nature, and therefore neither new nor strange) is in Johnson's final opinion the only topic proper for a poet, and delight rather than admiration is the proper end of all poetry.

I do not think critics of any persuasion can have much quarrel with Johnson's condemnation of a flamboyant striving after effect, at least in poetry. Though we like or expect our poets' learning to be displayed where it can be admired, we are suspicious of rhetoric in the grand manner and the large, direct, peremptory style. Like Coleridge, we suppose that "the poetic power . . . subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry"; with Keats, we are disposed to "hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us, and, if we do not agree, seems to put its hand in its breeches pocket."[3] *Ars celare artem* has an ancient prescription, and one (it may be suspected) deeply imbedded in the psychological character of an art which depends (like poetry) on evocation. On the other hand, contemporary taste does not attribute much of this striving after effect to Donne, because we are likely to take a broader definition of propriety than Johnson or Dryden; we are more disposed to grant that a metaphysical mind can look at almost anything in a metaphysical way. We are perhaps likely to insist upon some evidence of the metaphysical temperament; the cold raptures of Cowley often seem, in the terms of Donne's most melancholy metaphor, like "embroidered works" left upon "the slimy beach" by the tide of fashion. But granted the metaphysical excitement (one aspect of which is the much-discussed "metaphysical shudder"), we tolerate a great deal of elaboration as true to the poet's mind and temperament, which Johnson rejected as false to the social fact. Metaphysics have proved themselves no less successful in attracting "the fair" than

[2]Dryden, "Discourse Concerning Satire", *Works*, (Cambridge ed.), p. 283; Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets*, (Everyman), I, 23.

[3]Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XIV; Keats, Letter to J. H. Reynolds, 3 Feb. 1818.

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nature itself, and quite as intriguing to readers; though it is perhaps significant that the relatively small volume of Donne's sacred verse has been more widely influential—perhaps because it has seemed less contrived—than the artifices of the love-poetry, the elegies, or satires. At all events, whether because our comprehension is broader or our critical standards lower, we suffer the suspicion of theatricality more gladly; perhaps also because we are not sure where the accusation of theatricality will lead us. (If Donne is theatrical, therefore bad, what of Byron, Poe, Baudelaire, Rilke, Rimbaud, Yeats?—the list is endless.)

Hence, conscious exhibitionism is not very often attributed to Donne any more; and though there is no doubt it enters into his poetry, it would have to be much more potent and explicit than it is to disturb our appreciation of, say, the *Valediction Forbidding Mourning*. As for the first charge, that of bathos, it has not very often been explicitly levelled at Donne, but there seems no reason to doubt that his poetry is occasionally bathetic. For random examples one might refer to the teeming fish-roes in the *Elegy on Mris Boulstred*, or the commercial metaphor of the *Elegie on the Lord Chamberlain:*

> *no familie*
> *Ere rigg'd a soule for heavens discoverie*
> *With whom more Venturers more boldly dare*
> *Venture their states. . . .* (I, 287)

But the fault of bathos is not peculiarly metaphysical; any poet aiming at an elevated style may collapse into the bathetic, Milton and Wordsworth no less than Cowley and Donne; and there is nothing much to be observed about the collapse when it has occurred. It is really the third variety of false or wrong effect which is of special metaphysical concern. Crashaw is the most troubling poet, and the problem is, supposing the taste to be bad, in what context is it bad? Is a grotesque metaphor bad because of the kind of thing attempted or because of the way it is performed? When we object to some of Crashaw's erotic-devotional verse, are we really objecting to the poet's technique or to his subject?

Most discussions of the literary artist's rights and responsibilities with regard to his subject take as the extreme examples themes of unqualified nastiness. As a painter, we say, may choose to repre-

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sent a pile of garbage and yet represent it beautifully, so a poet may describe filthy and depraved experiences, wretchedness and horror, and yet derive from them beauty. Henry James has said many cogent and pertinent things about the folly of quarreling with a literary artist's *donnée;* and so long as we presume the subject to be such as may produce one single effect, one harmonious impression, the notion does not seem open to serious challenge. But whether or not there are subjects essentially incongruous, there certainly are combinations of subjects which invite if they do not necessarily involve incongruity. One of Donne's frequent themes, and Crashaw's primary topic, the yearning for a physical union with the deity, seems almost to defy the possibility of a unified emotional reaction. Its inherent tensions, if pushed very far, must either explode into a joke or balloon into a grotesque. With Donne the topic seems to have remained essentially a metaphor, a bit of conscious hyperbole; when he speaks of God ravishing him, or of his amorous soul courting Christ's mild dove, he is using language which he knows (and sometimes explicitly tells us, as in *Holy Sonnet XIII)* is exaggerated and "poetic". This is merely an inversion of the sort of semi-blasphemous joke that occurs in *The Relique,* where he glances at a comparison between himself and Jesus Christ; if it were anything more than a joke, it would quickly become intolerable. But in Crashaw's verse, Donne's "puzzled and humorous shuffling of the pieces" becomes a fusion. That is, it becomes a poetic unity; the poet unites feelings and thoughts about things which have, indeed, some points of genuine similarity, but between which common sense maintains a degree of antipathy. And the special quality of his fusion is that he does not try to gloss over the latent antipathy, for to sense it is to sense the depth of the feelings that override it. The poet loves God as a baby loves its mother's breast and as a martyr loves the final spear-thrust, he loves God as a gaping wound and a voluptuous mouth, in sophisticated paradox and childish innocence—until all his imagery becomes, as Mr. Warren has finely said, "a phantasmagoria . . . of shifting, restless appearances."[4] The unity of opposites, of pain with pleasure, life with death, fruition with denial, assertion with surrender, is his favorite theme. It always involves a degree of incongruity, often of incongruity unresolved, a sense of strain

[4]James, *The Art of Fiction, passim;* Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw,* p. 192.

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and grotesquerie. It is precisely because he succeeds so well in unifying into one assertion, over the most intense opposition, his "highest" thoughts and "lowest" feelings, his most physical sensations and his most spiritual aspirations, that contemporary taste is sometimes revolted and sometimes amused by Crashaw.

One aspect of Crashaw's "bad taste" is the deliberate injection of a homely word or circumstance amid lofty spiritual reflections. His "financial" metaphors are one example; he likes to speak of shares and dividends, investments and profit-sharing by man in Christ and vice-versa. More striking even than this is the conceit in *The Weeper*, whereby the Magdalen's tears are imagined as rising, like cream, to the top of a cosmic bottle:

IV

Upwards thou dost weep.
Heavn's bosome drinks the gentle stream.
Where the milky rivers creep,
Thine floats above; & is the cream.
Waters above th' Heavns, what they be
We'are taught best by thy TEARES & thee.

V

Every morn from hence
A brisk Cherub something sippes
Whose sacred influence
Addes sweetnes to his sweetest Lippes.
Then to his musick. And his song
Tasts of this Breakfast all day long. (259-260)

The transformation of salt tears to milk is queer; raising the butterfat content to make it cream is odder yet. The delicacy of "sippes" gives us a slight respite; but the domestic word "Breakfast" in congruence with the idea of aftertaste (the whole image being underlain by notions of cud-chewing, angelic saliva, and a delicate series of cosmic belches) would seem to be in the worst possible taste. Actually, Crashaw seems to be trying to convey the idea of intimacy in the most intimate terms available to earthly creatures. The underlying metaphor is perhaps that which calls tears the milk of human kindness; the edible aspects of the image are extended from its center, not imposed from without. The fact that there is something slightly nauseating

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about the terms of this extension is not wholly apart from Crashaw's intent; for it is precisely *human* kindness he is describing, hence incommensurate with the divine nature. The swooning, erotic ecstasy which Crashaw delights to describe is one ultimate expression of a human malaise, but like all others it is inadequate. There is a sort of God (he is Crashaw's) in whose eyes a human being is always a joke in slightly bad taste, particularly when most "heroically" aware of his own human limitations. One doesn't, under these circumstances, know quite where the critical imputation of "bad taste" can meaningfully lie.

Another interesting vulgarity of the same order is that in the epigram *On Our Crucified Lord, Naked and Bloody:*

> *They'have left thee naked, LORD, O that they had!*
> *This Garment too, I would they had deny'd.*
> *Thee with thy selfe they have too richly clad,*
> *Opening the purple wardrobe in thy side:*
> *O never could there be garment too good*
> *For thee to weare, but this of thine own blood.* (85)

Blood is a royal garment as it is precious, purple, and confers a crown; yet it clothes many souls otherwise naked, hence the wound from which it proceeds is a clothes-closet. Nothing, from one point of view, could be more disgusting and grotesque. Yet how else to convey the combination of sacred, spiritual preciousness with the vulgar, social utility which is most oddly betrayed by our expression "*Good* Friday"? One may, presumably, feel that it is silly to think about Christ's blood in two such different ways at once; given the objective, it's not clear how one could hit off such a thought more neatly than in a phrase like "purple wardrobe"—though *(because)* in the process decorums wonderfully collide.

Aside from the grating and dynamic plebeianism, Crashaw also has a sometimes disturbing way of dealing with orifices, which he likes to dwell upon. The little poem *On the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord* has an almost surrealist way with a wound:

> *O these wakeful wounds of thine!*
> *Are they Mouthes? or are they eyes?*
> *Be they mouthes, or be they eyne,*
> *Each bleeding part some one supplies.*

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Lo, a mouth! whose full bloom'd lips
At too deare a rate are roses:
Lo, a blood-shot eye! that weeps,
And many a cruell teare discloses.

O thou that on this foot hast laid
Many a kisse, and many a teare,
Now thou shalt have all repaid
What soe're thy charges were.

This foot hath got a mouth and lips
To pay the sweet summe of thy kisses,
To pay thy teares, an eye that weeps,
Instead of teares, such gems as this is.

The difference only this appeares,
(Nor can the change offend)
The debt is paid in Ruby-teares
Which thou in Pearles did lend. (85)

The vulgarity of the bargain ("too deare a rate" and "whatsoe're thy charges were" are touches worthy of Cowley) counterpoints the extravagant wound-imagery; the wounds which become mouths to kiss and eyes to weep have distinctly traumatic overtones, and the sensual cherishing of wounds plays off very finely against the counting-out of a money debt. If we resist the poet's imaginative unification of his feelings about Christ on the grounds that kissing wounds is unlovely and perverse, and counting out change is vulgar, we may seem to quarrel with the poet's central point, that love of Christ includes all extremes and reconciles all contraries. The white tear of innocence is repaid by the red blood of anguish; "nor can the change offend"—or, for that matter, the combination. Under the circumstances, "bad taste" seems an irrelevant notion, and the door is open to any sort of violent incongruity which can be yoked (preferably in the name of religion but really in the interests of any strong feeling) to a higher unity. The difficulty of drawing incongruities together thus becomes a measure of the loftiness of the impulses which unite them; bad taste has become a form of good taste.

Crashaw himself never carried the revolting aspects of his imagery farther than in the epigram on Luke 11, "Blessed be the Paps which thou hast sucked":

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Suppose he had been tabled at thy Teates,
Thy hunger feels not what he eates:
Hee'l have his Teat e're long, a bloody one,
The mother then must suck the son. (80)

The poet here comes close to a direct statement that the Incarnation was a revolting joke on Jesus and Mary; incest, perversion, cannibalism, and the extra incongruity of "tabled at thy Teates" make the quatrain a little gem of encrusted grotesquerie. Most striking of all is the neat, swift, rather pleased tone of the antithesis; in notions not only lovely but familiar, it seems, horrid possibilities may lurk. Certainly in this poem Crashaw can hardly have intended anything but a nasty twist to the spiritual-carnal relation.

Equally outrageous to the conventional sense of decorum, but comic in its startling release of inappropriate connotations is the famous stanza XIX of *The Weeper:*

And now where're he strayes
Among the Galilean mountaines,
Or more unwellcome wayes,
He's follow'd by two faithfull fountaines;
Two walking baths; two weeping motions;
Portable, & compendious oceans. (262)

This deservedly famous stanza reminds one of nothing so much as a landscape by Dali. The Magdalen's grief is grotesque, it distorts her out of all resemblance to humanity. The human features as they distort and break down into tears have usually been accounted ugly; her tears, as they transcend ordinary grief, transcend ordinary ugliness and absurdity. It is not, as grief, even specially acceptable to Christ. The "more unwellcome wayes" are of course those leading to his crucifixion, but in conjunction with the cumulative absurdities at the end of the stanza, they may also be taken to suggest an attitude. Her grief is helpless, uncontrollable, pathetic, yet portable and abridged because of her absurd humanity. One laughs at the images, but one squirms under them too; and this effect can, if Crashaw's art is art and not accident, be taken as meaningful. The whole technique of loosely, floridly extended metaphor seems to culminate in this stanza, which is ridiculous, of course, as an operatic duet between a pair

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of duellists is ridiculous; the art is developed beyond and in defiance of nature. But its absurdity can be seen as true to a sort of feeling; and if the feeling doesn't assert itself irresistibly over the difficulties imposed by flesh, blood, and a sense of humor, irresistible triumph is not, as I take it, what is intended. The feeling is to be colored by a radical sense of absurdity—even to be derived, by a queer kind of negative emphasis, from the absurdity, as if the absurdity were somehow a guarantee of the point of view from which alone a grief so ghastly could seem absurd. A Christian poet, at least, can scarcely be blamed for assuming, and asking his readers to assume for the moment, a definition of reality which includes more than the humanly demonstrable; and how to suggest such a reality if not through the feelings imagined as appropriate to it?

Severe judges with nineteenth-century tastes used to cite passages from *The Weeper* and similar poems as evidence of Crashaw's complete inability to criticize his own work; Miss Wallerstein, intent on rehabilitating Crashaw, undertook to minimize them as youthful follies, soon outgrown. But Mr. Austin Warren, picking up the old-fashioned view with a difference, was the first to suggest that they are the product of a different sort of taste than conventional "good" taste; not failures to resemble Marvell's *Garden,* but poems formed on a different model altogether.[5] Miss Wallerstein's compromise is charitable, but scarcely seems compatible with the personal chronology of Richard Crashaw; after all, the 1648 version of *The Weeper* added the stanzas on "walking baths", and as Crashaw died early in 1649, one can scarcely dismiss the stanza as immature work. The "purple wardrobe" epigram was first published in *Steps to the Temple* (1646) only three years before his death, and reprinted in 1652, along with the "financial" *Caritas Nimia* and a specially visceral and sanguinary song, *Upon the Bleeding Crucifix.* Crashaw's taste, it appears, developed neither toward nor away from the grotesque metaphor which we consider in "bad taste"; it simply included an area of "very bad taste" within a larger area of "inoffensive taste", and rose occasionally to something we can call "impeccable taste", always provided our standards of taste are purely conventional. In less colored words, Crashaw's images sometimes contain much of the grotesque

[5]George Saintsbury, *History of Elizabethan Literature,* 369; Ruth Wallerstein, *Richard Crashaw, passim;* Warren, *op. cit.,* Chap. III.

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(plebeian or visceral), sometimes little, sometimes none at all. What they contain they subordinate to a purer harmony sometimes easily, sometimes with difficulty, sometimes only by violent imputation.

That metaphysical devotional poetry of this order involves two radically different sorts of taste rather than two stages in an individual's poetic development may be seen by turning to an example of modern devotional baroque. It is perhaps too early to tell if the so-called *Religious Sonnets* of Dylan Thomas will survive or on what terms, whether because or in spite of their taste, supported by more conventional poems or under impulse of their own buoyancy. But it is clear that enjoyment of poems which describe Christ as a "hang-nail cracked from Adam", the angel Gabriel as a cowboy, and God the Father as an "old cock from nowheres", depends on a taste which is not only metaphysical but includes a tolerance for the baroque and the grotesque.

There is a great deal about Thomas's sonnets that is interesting, aside from their taste. Technically, they are a rare treat—driving, energetic, complex, and lawless. They sometimes accept off-rhyme, or assonance as the equivalent of rhyme, and feminine endings as the equivalent of assonance; sometimes they forget recognizable rhymes altogether. Their basic rhyme-pattern is set by the first sonnet of the ten, if my ear serves me, as abcbacdedefgfg, but the c-c rhyme, originally as weak as Adam-scream, soon fades altogether, and some of the other rhymes are forgotten when convenient. The punctuation of particular sonnets is odd; a semicolon, particularly, seems to belong one line down in I,2 and II,6; and a question mark in IV,6 cries out to be made a comma. The grammar as written often defies parsing, the reference of pronouns is chaotic (I's, you's, he's, and we's being used without either distinct or consistent points of reference); and the imagery, always violent and often grotesque, is based in turn on castration, Homer, Apocalypse, Egyptology, pastoral, Wild West, and playing cards.

So dark is the imagery, indeed, that there lingers about even the central theme a whole series of difficulties, the explanations of which have blurred the poetry quite as much as have the difficulties themselves. Mr. Elder Olson, for instance, in an ingenious and persuasive, but (I fear) essentially wrong-headed volume, has recently argued that, among the six levels of symbolism in the sonnets, are included "a level based on ancient myth, principally

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Greek, representing the fortunes of the sun in terms of the adventurers of the sun-hero Hercules; and a level based on relations of the *constellation* Hercules to other constellations and astronomical phenomena" (*Poetry of Dylan Thomas*, Chicago, 1954, p. 64). Now most of Mr. Olson's levels make good sense without wholesale importations of symbolic material; and so they should do. But Hercules and astronomy must be imposed on the poem by main force. In the first sonnet, for example, Hercules is said to be the "hang-nail cracked from Adam" because he is mortal; but he simply does not fit here for a number of reasons including the facts that (1) he wasn't strictly mortal, (2) he didn't derive from Adam but from Jove and Alcmena, and (3) he isn't properly referred to as a "hang-nail" under any circumstances. Christ on the other hand is subject to none of these disabilities. Considering the poem as a jig-saw puzzle for the moment, Hercules simply does not fit. In the same sonnet, Mr. Olson identifies Hercules with "the gentleman of wounds" because of the shirt of Nessus and because the atlas-eater (Cerberus-death) has bitten out his mandrake. But the shirt of Nessus is pure extrapolation here; no shirt is mentioned, no Nessus or centaur, no Deianira, no treacherous gift, no fire or poison; while the wounds of the atlas-eater might as well be inflicted on Achilles, King David, or the Church Militant as on Hercules.

By the time he has explicated his Herculean way through the first three sonnets, Mr. Olson may well claim a breather—"the Hercules narrative is interrupted"; and when it resumes, so much of the emphasis has shifted to Christ as the central figure in the poem, that one is puzzled to know what Hercules was doing in the first sonnets. It is significant that almost all the references to Hercules and his accompanying cast of characters have to be offset by Mr. Olson through at least one intermediate symbol and sometimes more. Thomas speaks of the gentleman lying graveward "with his furies"; he means to say, apparently, that Hercules is declining to the West followed by Scorpio, Draco, and Serpens Caput. In Sonnet III the tree-tailed worm is "Horned down with skullfoot and the skull of toes"; and this means that Hydra is put down by rising Aries and Cameleopardus, and Cameleopardus who should suggest to us a giraffe is recognized here because (it seems) he does not resemble a giraffe at all, but a sea-nettle and therefore a cephalopod and therefore a skullfoot. The ingenuity of this multiple transposition surpasseth understanding; but be-

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wildering ingenuity is necessary only because Mr. Olson has tried to rebuild the whole poem around one of its very minor and peripheral overtones. There is enough complexity in the sonnets as Thomas wrote them, without adventitious confusions imported from astrology. We shall come closer to appreciating Thomas's verse if we assume that the central theme is just what it appears to be, crucifixion and resurrection; that the "levels of symbolism" are somewhat fewer than half a dozen; and that the point of view is explicitly that at which Crashaw only hinted, that Incarnation represents a vicious joke played by a malicious God on Christ, Mary, and mankind.

The appropriateness of this topic to the metaphysical style is apparent; indeed, the style is inherently sympathetic to the theme, for its essence is the mingling under stress of an over-riding emotion of two disparate spheres amid deliberate overtones of esthetic as well as ethical anguish. But the blinding closeness of Thomas's contrasts has not many parallels in literature; for intensity seems to be the chief value of his style, and the effect is brilliantly achieved by a close, compact grinding together of images under the impulse of a steady, rhythmic pulse and a taut, heavily end-stopped line. The fact that this poetry is "hard reading", as it undoubtedly is, appears to have bulked large enough in many readers' minds to obscure the question, what sort of effect is being aimed at. Thomas evidently intends, like Crashaw, a chaotic mingling of many different sorts of anguish, a phantasmagoria of pain and grief. To achieve this end, he uses language percussively, like a pianist playing with his forearms, creating a furious, barbaric, dissonant clangor, which has all sorts of intensity but not a great deal of structure. Thus, though he has imposed several sorts of uniformity on his material, there is almost nothing about it which could be described as unity. Images are repeated, varied, punned upon, transformed, and trodden down by other images; but there is no one logical or emotional development which exercises control over all others.

In this respect, Thomas's sonnets contrast strikingly with Donne's, or even with Crashaw's poetic style. The searching, darting movement of Donne's thought is proverbial; though the motivating and directing force is generally temperament, the shape it assumes is logical, and it rarely defies logical possibilities, certainly never exaggerates that defiance without qualification or ultimate resolution in a larger logical unity. So with Crashaw;

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though the movement of images is more emotional than logical, and so the texture of the verse is looser, the images cluster and exalt themselves in a clear pattern of responses to the intensity of the poet's feeling. But when, for example, Thomas in *Sonnet IV* undertakes a series of paradoxical questions in the manner of "Go and catch a falling star", they neither come from anywhere nor lead to anything. The one assertion which seems to derive is the poet's vision of the Resurrection after the Entombment:

> *Corset the boneyard for a crooked lad,*
> *Button your bodice on a hump of splinters,*
> *My camel's eyes will needle through the shroud.*

Of any other poet, it would be ridiculous to say, he has nothing to lead up to but the Resurrection. But here we are faced with a Resurrection which occurs (*Sonnet IV*) before the Crucifixion (*VIII*), and which is not built into an event of any stature anyhow. When his camel's eyes have needled through the shroud, Thomas does not see anything in particular. He goes on to discuss with an orphic absence of verbs, the process of seeing, but says nothing of the central actor or incident:

> *Love's reflection of the mushroom features,*
> *Stills snapped by night in the bread-sided field,*
> *Once close-up smiling in the wall of pictures,*
> *Arc-lamped thrown back upon the cutting flood.*

Whether one looks at *Sonnet IV* by itself or as one of a sequence, it trails off without either conclusion or attachment; and the accumulated absurdities of the first seven lines lead to no such resolution as their rising energy seems to be preparing for.

The fact is that the sonnets are fragmentary in much the same way as *The Weeper,* but more radically; they lack not only overall form but defined relations between parts. One mark of this lack is a vagueness about the attempts at explication; most of them suffer from a hesitant, either-or tone which seems to contrast with Mr. Olson's energetic imposition of the Hercules-pattern, but is really just another consequence of the fact that the relations between elements—between, say, the bagpipe-breasted sirens and the crucifixion, or the white bear quoting Virgil and two-gunned Gabriel—has been defined by the critic, not the poet. "Maybe Thomas means this or perhaps that." The implication is that it doesn't matter very much which alternative

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one chooses; and since, in a sense, Thomas himself hasn't made any definite choice, it isn't really up to the reader to choose either . . . All this is well and good; while the rich six-fold complexity invoked by Mr. Olson is no doubt extravagant, there is on the other hand no need to impoverish the poem by forcing it into any flat pattern of unity. Better a fragile fretwork of casually related or unrelated imagery than a schematic allegory torturing unrelated details into artificial unity. But then if the whole structural unity of the poems is resolved into a single drumming, extravagant antithesis, along with all hope for variety of effect, the greater part of our notion of decorum must go by the board.

No one, I take it, is so naive as to suppose there is any decorum about the sonnet as a form to which the value of Thomas's poems can be in any way related. In addition, it appears there is no particular decorum of the subject, which, so long as each individual section is built of sufficiently violent and intensive contrasts, can require of the poet no structure of mood, tone, imagery, temporal order or grammatical assertion. Mr. Hughes might well find the set of puns on Jacob's ladder (*Sonnet II*) in execrable taste. (I should make clear that I write without benefit of Mr. Hughes' actual opinion on Thomas's sonnets; but the specific reference is for example's sake only.) Yet he could scarcely deny that they contribute powerfully to the tangled, intense, contradictory impressions which the poet has undertaken to convey. Will he now argue that these particular impressions, as a given subject matter, are in "bad taste"? Or else withdraw his notions of "bad taste" as irrelevant to this sort of poem? Or perhaps seek some form of compromise in allowing the effects undertaken but condemning the means used to achieve them? The only obstacle to this last procedure is that it would be hard to find an element of "bad taste" in the sonnets which does not contribute directly to the effect chosen by the poet. Hence one concludes that it is folly to apply the ideas of "good" and "bad taste" in any other way than wholesale. If the central meaning of a poem is not subject to the imputation of bad taste, no meaning can attach to a condemnation of ornaments which may be perfectly appropriate to, and expressive of, the central theme. Thus the real complaint against metaphysical poetry is not that it assumes one sort of taste as a touchstone in opposition to all others, but that it casts a doubt on the general relevance of *any* single standard of taste.

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Poems may, in fact, be written either for men under tension or for men at rest (there are other categories, but for metaphysical poets this is crucial). Abraham sacrificing Isaac is not possessed of the same taste as Abraham among his flocks and herds and silver and gold and menservants and maidservants and camels and asses. Metaphysical poems are properly written by and for Abrahams on the mountain; they assume a state of tension as primary, and if one sometimes suspects that slitting Isaac's weasand isn't altogether unwelcome to the poets, nothing could make clearer the essentially decorous character of the anguish which they find obligatory. Abraham's taste in his anguish is neither better nor worse than his taste at rest; it is simply different, radically different. It is no longer esthetic, or at least purely esthetic; it proclaims itself ethical, and in the very act of repudiating esthetic standards, at its paradoxical best, it fulfills them.

The only decorum which metaphysical poetry retains seems to be that dramatic one which relates to the mind and condition of man. How much of a decorum this actually is may very well be questioned; it is certainly far less strict than decorums based either on form or on subject. In fact, one can scarcely conceive a state of mind so remote from the conventionally placid, smoothly functioning "norm" as not to imply a valid decorum of its own, however primitive. From the point of view of critical values, this leaves matters in a good deal of a mess. One would like to be able to say that certain minds are too commonplace and unstrained, while others are too remote and tormented, to be proper theaters of poetic drama. So, in a sense, one can say—so long as one makes clear that the judgment is purely social, not literary. It is a fair bet that readers of the future will expect rather more play of sentiment over facts than is found, say, in *The Loves of the Plants,* and rather less than one finds in *The Four Zoas.* But the one poem is as decorous to the mind and condition of the writer as the other, or as any intermediate work; our prediction is based merely on a vague, middle-of-the-road notion of human nature, not on a literary principle.

Thus critics cannot place one decorum above another without exalting one subject-matter above another, so that all systems of critical value rest ultimately on systems of general value which are only remotely comparable, if at all. This is a discouraging observation for critics. But writers are not apt to be so seriously

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disturbed by an all-but-universal relativism. Unprincipled creatures at best, they can rest content with a merest fragment of that value-hierarchy at which the critics' Babel is constantly building. Thomas quite properly welcomed the chance to judge for himself how close poetry can come to the psychopathic and still survive. He drew the line closer than poets since Blake have generally drawn it; there are plenty of reasons for thinking *Angst* so permanent and general a condition of thinking mankind as to more than justify his choice.

Yet our final note should be uneasy. The audience for poetry is always fickle and a treacherous element on which to wager; the more special his commitment, the bolder the venture on which a metaphysical poet embarks. Perhaps a slender pastoral like *Fern Hill* puts down a broader and more tenacious root than the *Religious Sonnets;* though one always hesitates to take an artist at his less strenuous valuation, still it is not unknown that a man's diversions should outlast his more solemnly conceived undertakings. The single contrast to which the metaphysical poet sacrifices so much may repay him poorly. What man, especially poetry-reading man, will be like fifty years from now seems utterly unpredictable; and in this matter particularly the 17th-century parallel falls down completely. For the 17th-century revolution was quick and in its own way relatively thorough; by creating new areas of agreement, new classes of readers and writers, and new vulgar standards of taste, it promptly paved the way for an enlightened literature of which the first great exponent was Dryden. Simplified and standardized, rendered systematic or sentimental, the plain, rational style of Dryden easily became the common possession of all 18th-century Englishmen save fantastics and madmen like Smart and Blake. So splendid an act of uniformity seems unlikely at present. Unless it be sought among the colonial semi-classicals like Roy Campbell and John Manifold, or among those queer oldfashioned hybrids which are peddled under the label of "socialist realism", nothing on the current horizon seems to correspond to the enlightened literature which after the civil wars succeeded the metaphysical age in England. We have Cowleys aplenty but no visible Drydens. The metaphysical style is decaying, sure enough, but no area of agreement, no common definition of reality, appears ready to support the plain, rational style which should take its place.

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JOHN FANDEL

Testament

I

Light blossoms on the eyes
That open just as flowers
Might in a paradise;
Gradually, sleep of hours

Sleeps. However close
As breath in sleep I knew
A realm, this sun arose,
This meadow morning grew

Into a window scene
I look upon, as one
Rising in between
The darkness and the sun.

Usual birds again
Assault the waking ear;
I listen: the song is plain,
Familiar, clean and clear.

The air they quake is quite
As fresh when yesterday
I woke to the wedding white
World as I wake today.

Last night's tomorrow is
A fair accomplished fact;
From a dark change I face this
Weather of day and act.

II

A flower in the meadow
Floats, a lower star;
Pure "I am" in my shadow
Of "I am"; what we are

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I wonder, face to face,
Petal to flesh, the air
Keeping our love in place;
We see each other where

We stand alike apart,
Each arrayed to a way
Shaped to a separate heart
Yet one in a common day;

Each to a single sphere
Different and the same
In the eden atmosphere,
And the dark sleep each can name.

Each of us somehow turned
Out of the dark to be
Turned into the dark that burned
Our one nativity.

Flesh- to petal-eye
One in a certain hour;
Under our general sky
I touch the morning flower.

III

I watch on a grain of sand
The ants arrange the world,
Mapping an underland
That the flower shows unfurled

From roots into that dark
Where the ants go in and out,
Sun to shadow, stark
Shadow to sun. About

My Gulliver stance they move
The patterns of my breath
Held for their giant love,
Breathed as their little death,

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So, although sluggard by
Their small relentless drive
Changing the same earth I
Stand upon to live,

I hold the curious hand,
Thunder for their hid
Palace, to understand
Whatever little they did,

Whatever marvel made
Where my foot could curse,
Beneath yet above my staid
Mind, their universe.

IV

I walk by the stream, I see
My lips kissing the sky;
A green leaf passes me
Touching my rippled thigh.

The leaf, in a swan-poise, lies
Upon a greener leaf
Holding it like a prize,
An emerald of grief,

Because the leaf will ride
Beyond my hand upon
The stream, or by my side:
Neither can help; so, on

The falls the leaf goes under
With the image that held it there;
My heart and the waterfall thunder.
I had stood so near,

A nearness just too far
For flesh or water hand
To save the leaf. I scar
The water or the land

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By water image or
By shade. The water-I
Can kiss the sky; on shore
I cannot touch the sky.

V

One in the daily landscape
I pass as one among
Others, by flower or shape
Of stone, my silent song

Held as near as heart
Beats to hearts that beat;
Being one apart
And part of those I meet,

I bear the song we sing
Separate to the night,
Secret of anything
We say in usual light.

I keep it close as close
Somehow we never are
Though admiring one rose,
Looking for one star.

I breathe it in my breath
Saying the meaning of
The saving of our death
Is, "I love, I love."

Yet, all of us stand as two,
All of us fall alone;
I never will undo
The stone forever stone.

VI

Now in the sundown sheen
I face the tempered room;

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Against the rainbow screen
The strange night creatures bloom.

Wings beat to touch the light
They cannot reach. I see
How some touch there despite
The screen: finality.

I know a same desire;
I know its thundersong,
The raging for the fire.
The night will not be long.

I strip myself in prayer
Down to a taste of dust;
I find a fire there
That I can touch; I must.

I think with dark about
Me, we are all the same
When the light goes out:
A need of similar name,

A folding of the eyes,
A reason put away.
Each of us dreams to rise.
I sleep for the waking day.

RICHARD EBERHART

The Wisdom of Insecurity

The endless part of disintegration
Is that it will build again;

Of a robin,
That he will become a memory;

Of a hand-great August moth,
With eyes in his wings, so fine

As to represent himself as a fable,
That he will be tried again in a poem;

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Of a petal-departed rose,
That it is its loving grandparents;

Of the evil of man to man,
That it is the tenacity of mankind

To put it out of mind in the long time
And commit to the heart new fidelities;

Of the broken music of silence,
That it will be brought together,

Renaming poetry; of the day's colors,
That they make the painter's paradigm;

Of immeasurable fallibility,
That it becomes art, by authority;

That the disintegration of time
Becomes the enrichment of timelessness,

So that nothing is destroyed, but finds
Its truth in the eternal mind;

That death provides nowise no escape.
Man becomes some other shape.

I must have come down from Adam
And am his metropolitan.

The leaves are falling and the rain.
Mystery is palpable. Sameness ever the same,

Ever different, where I look
Is through the fish to the fish-hook.

The strangeness of the poet's dream
Will set what is, not what seems.

When you see destruction itself
You see form out of the formless

As I recall in the Campo Santo, at Pisa,
The work of medieval Giovanni

Who painted an old man, prone and dead,
An infant, the soul, springing from his head.

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The Forgotten Rock

Tawny in a pasture by the true sea
Ship-shaped it stood, the never realizable
Rock.

It was the awe placed on this natural object,
When looking at one thing, another world was seen,
He remembered.

Even this rock, sun-stroked, high-fashioned,
Peopling dream, enticing him completely,
Was never itself.

With such subtlety the blood, blue-watery source,
Leaped from one thing to something other.
A double escape,

A paragon of sight was posed upon
The blue rock; the excitation of the world
Glanced off.

This was nothing but the world itself;
A voyage in blue distance under tawny charges
Vividly known,

As a ship like a jewel of sense, come to
With boundless appetite, is yet unknown,
And is forgotten,

As we forget time that is thoroughly gone,
But was so certainly there. We annihilate time
To remember,

And what we remember is the duality of time.
The rock was never known as it was,
But as we are.

It had a cave with an obscure dome
A hawk flew into heading home,
Killed instantly.

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Cousin Florence

There it is, a block of leaping marble
Given to me by an ancestor.
The hands that passed it held down ninety years.
She got it in the love-time of Swinburne.

This woman with her stalwart mien,
More like a Roman than a Greek,
Fumbled among old bags of rubble
For something indomitable that she could seek.

She saw the light of ancient days around her,
Calling in the hip-cracked hospital.
She chose at last. Then the clear light
Of reason stood up strong and tall.

With a pure, commanding grace
She handed me a piece of the Parthenon,
Saying, this I broke with my own hands,
And gave me the imagination of the Greeks.

I thought the spirit of this woman
The tallest that I had ever seen,
Stronger than the marble that I have,
Who was herself imagination's dream

By the moment of such sacrament,
A pure force transmitting love,
Endurance, steadfastness, her calm,
Her Roman heart, to mine, of dream.

I would rather keep her noble acts,
The blood of her powerful character, a mind
As good as any of her time, than search
My upward years for such a stone that leaps.

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GEORGE EGON HATVARY

Man and Wife

In the park, he and his wife had the bench all to themselves. "It's nice here," she said.

The tone of his "Yes" was civil enough to prevent her from asking what was the matter. Long explanations were not, of course, necessary; it was simple to remind her of what he had more than once explained, that he was slower than she to get over a quarrel. But that his present mood was an example of this difference in their temperaments he preferred not to force into her consciousness, for the idea of her attempting to accelerate the process by, for example, taking hold of his hand was now repellent. He was incapable of pretending to welcome such a gesture; rather than to have to withdraw from it, he preferred carefully to hide his present feelings of indifference.

Concentration on what he all along knew, that his resentment would eventually dissolve, would have aided him in forgiving her as she had already forgiven him. But he found satisfaction in this mood. To be cut off from the last link between himself and humanity had a dark charm of its own, and that his isolation was secret, that his wife next to him was engulfed by an illusion of re-established harmony between them, only enhanced his perverse pleasure.

He looked across the park at a group of tall apartment buildings, brought by perspective into a fine relationship with the intervening trees. The night had reduced all colors, but the illuminated windows flickered through the blown leaves. He experienced longing—for what? he asked himself, attempting to visualize conventional settings: the country, the tropics, some European city, the sea-washed beach. None satisfied his hungry imagination, and he had to conclude that what he longed for was directly around him: the bench, the park touching a quietly lit-up street, the soft air. This, read about in a book or remembered in another country or visualized from the invalid's bed, indeed measured up in beauty and intensity to any setting in which to—well, drink deeply of life. But how could he under the circumstances? He was shackled.

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Were he younger, had their marriage begun in the passionate years of post-adolescence, he would have toyed more seriously with the idea which, he felt, was at one time or another in the mind of every man: some day quietly to walk out of his marriage. But he had known years of solitude, and now visualizing himself alone on the bench he remembered a younger man with casual friends, longing to be loved—longing, he had to admit, for precisely this.

Thus, the dark joy of a previous moment, unable to lead to a resolution to run away, lay purposeless in him, then died, leaving a gap of inner desolation.

It was into this that her next remark fell: "Electric lights can give such beautiful effects at night when they're not messed up with neon!"

The ease in her tone he was unable to match; he could only observe, "Perhaps you don't hate New York so much after all." He regretted his remark, for he feared the tiresome repetition of a dispute in which he would have again to prove that this too was New York—more so, historically speaking, than the jungle of stone northward.

But she avoided it. "It's really the heat one objects to," she said reflectively. "That's why I've been thinking so much lately about a place in the country. . . ."

This too had come up before, and he let his attention drift from her words. They had already decided that for the present a summer cottage was beyond their means, so why insist on dreams? To her, of course, the idea possessed greater reality, since her past was inseparably bound up with a house; but neither he nor his family had ever owned one, and from facing new experiences he instinctively shrank. Even if they had the money he would not know how to go about the matter—where to look for property, what agent to see, how to judge the grounds, the house, the appliances. When she dropped her voice to conclude a sentence he merely said: "We've only had one hot spell this summer."

He looked at her to receive her "Yes, haven't we been lucky?" taking in at the same time the form of a girl approaching with her dog on the dim path. Generally he made no secret of looking at women—in fact, it was his wife who would often indicate to him by squeezing his hand or pressing his arm that some splendid creature was not to be missed. The joke they both appreciated

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was that he rarely had to be reminded, but he knew that he must never let her know to what depths these nonchalant impressions could penetrate. Now, for instance, he felt his wife must not realize that her own face was not the primary object within his visual range, and he sought safety from discovery by removing his elbow from the back of the bench and shifting his eyes to the ground—to a crumpled piece of paper at his feet.

"Of course, August isn't over yet," she said, and he looked up at her, noting by the way that the dog was a Scottie and its mistress handsome, with massive hair.

His wife too was handsome, perhaps beautiful—it was hard to say, for their years together had transformed her face into a symbol of her whole being. Her features amounted no longer to a face but to her, signaling her presence and reflecting moods he could recognize: less and less frequently could he observe those features for their own sake, as though he had just seen them for the first time, and it was in this fact that he felt sometimes the blessing, sometimes the bane, of marriage.

The girl and the dog had now reached the vicinity of their bench and they both looked up. The dog, perhaps sensing an imperceptible slowing down of her mistress's gait, came as near to them as the leash allowed, inducing the girl to hesitate, then to stop, then to take a step toward them. He noticed an unlit cigarette between her fingers.

Her words of request and the little grunt of assent with which he extended the flame dissolved in his wife's smiling words: "Nice doggie!"

She thanked them, and he remembered the blueness of her eyes as he glanced after the little black animal moving once again with short, rapid steps in its mistress's wake.

His wife's lingering smile now became intimate, and he gave way to an impulse to receive it in a similar spirit. "Now if I'd been sitting here alone," he found himself saying, "do you suppose she would have asked for a light?"

She shook her head humorously; and he said, he hoped, comically enough, "Such is life!"

They sat without speaking, until a mood came over him to observe: "Strange how one takes life for granted. When I was younger I never thought of myself as thirty-five without quali-

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fying it by an 'if I live that long'—as indeed I do now when I think of myself as fifty. Well, here I am at thirty-five and in good health. Isn't it a miracle? I ought to be grateful."

"To whom?"

"That," he said looking up at her, "will be the cornerstone of my return to God." He smiled, it seemed to him, at once at the idea of his becoming religious and at her skepticism. "The trouble with us is," he went on, "that we keep thinking of God as a person. Try thinking of God as It—a principle. Of course," he added, "that more or less removes one's inspiration to be grateful."

She nodded, and he relapsed into thought. Theology was useful just now, for he felt an urge to communicate (she was intelligent) with the least danger of a precipitate gesture or word of affection on her part. Theology made her think, and thinking, she was always his friend rather than wife.

But she was growing sleepy. He had tried not to interpret her thrown-away half-cigarette as an inevitable sign, and when her facial muscles signaled an approaching yawn he turned his head toward the chatting Italians on a neighboring bench. But when she asked what time it was, he was forced to look at her and perceive her somewhat drooping lips.

"Little after eleven," he said.

"Maybe we ought to go home, darling."

Oh, if the pattern had been such that he could now let her go and remain here alone! The dark trees and the illuminated buildings and the soft air were to be taken from him! Did he dare, as a compromise, to walk her home and then return to the park—or roam the streets a bit by himself?

"All right, if you want to," he said quietly, rising.

During their walk home she reached for his hand, and he let her take it and hold on to it, but he wondered whether on reaching the house it might not be possible to announce that he had a headache or some inner restlessness, for which a walk around the block would—

But on reaching the house he merely felt for his key and opened the door and followed her up the steps.

The apartment was warm, and he took off his shirt and turned on the fan, then sat down in an armchair by the window and picked up a magazine.

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"Honey," he heard her, "you want anything to eat?"

"No," he said. "I'm going to read a while."

"I'm dreadfully tired," she said, then added, "There's milk and cheese if you get hungry later."

He had opened the magazine at random, but now, on dipping into the article before him, he was forced to conclude that he too was sleepy. Nevertheless, he remained in the chair, flipping the pages, listening to his wife moving about beyond the open door, to the metallic gliding of the shower curtain, the rush of water in the tub. A feeling had come over him which sought to be defined as pity, and as though pity sought to be justified, he found himself thinking that one could easily slip in the bathtub and injure oneself. All of this was sheer superstition, he knew, yet concrete details had already been set in motion in his mind: the shriek he would hear, his reaction, his feverish telephone call —was it quicker to look up the number of the hospital than to ask Information?

Then she appeared, wrapped in a towel, came to his chair, and kissed him.

"Good night," he said, watching her vanish beyond the open door.

He heard her "Good night" from the bedroom.

"Good night," he called back, singing his words slightly to temper their necessary force.

All sound had now ceased beyond the open door, and as he sat there scrutinizing the cover of the magazine he thought of himself in relationship only with the furniture and the walls and the silence. Here was an example of life without her: sitting here late at night under the fan, outside, for many coming hours, of the ken of the closest friend. The idea had come to him as a result neither of desire nor of fear; it had come abstractly, merely as a suddenly remembered thought-fragment from earlier that evening.

Soon he put down the magazine and stood before the open window. Several of the apartments across the street were still lit up, and it was possible here and there to perceive familiar persons moving about. The street was calm, then two cars passed by while a third one pulled up to the curb. A couple got out and entered the building across the street. The faint rhythm of jazz

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from someone's radio was mixing with the hum of the fan. He turned off the light and stood for some time before the window, smoking. Now a heretofore dark window lit up and someone adjusted the blind, and he instinctively glanced down at the parked car which stood abandoned, lifeless.

He went to the kitchen to drink a glass of milk, then to the bathroom. The strong light bedazzled his eyes, so that in the bedroom it took him a few minutes to get used to the darkness. Now he perceived his wife's slowly evolving form lying naked under the partially kicked-off sheet. She was sleeping with her arms spread out, her head tilted to one side, her hair, which she had been too lazy to put up, falling down her neck. He had seen her sleep with her mouth open, sometimes he had listened to little grunts she would make. But now she breathed evenly and her lips lay nicely against each other. He lay down next to her and, propped on one elbow, watched the calm face, the symbol of her being, which, he shuddered to realize, he had in the secrecy of his own heart, so monstrously abused. "I love you," he said without making a sound, longing to take her in his arms and cover her with kisses. But it would be cruel to wake her. He merely bent over her, allowing his lips the slightest touch of hers, then laid his head on the pillow. He wondered whether it was possible that she had, in a dream, been aware of his kiss.

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W. S. MERWIN

White Goat, White Ram

The gaiety of three winds is a game of green
Shining, of gray and gold-play in the holly-bush
Among the rocks on the hill-side, and if ever
The earth was shaken, say a moment ago
Or whenever it came to be, only the leaves and the spread
Sea still betray it, trembling; and their tale betides
The faintest of small voices, almost still.
A road winds among the gray rocks, over the hill,
Arrives from out of sight, from nowhere we know,
Of an uncertain colour; and she stands at the side
Nearer the sea, not far from the brink, legs straddled wide
Over the swinging udder, her back and belly
Slung like a camp of hammocks, her head raised,
The narrow jaw grinding sideways, ears flapping sideways,
Eyes wide apart like the two moons of Mars
At their opposing. So broadly is she blind
Who has no names to see with: over her shoulder
She sees not summer, not the idea of summer,
But green meanings, shadows, the gold light of now, familiar,
The sense of long day-warmth, of sparse grass in the open
Game of the winds; an air that is plenitude,
Describing itself in no name; all known before,
Perceived many times before, yet not
Remembered, or at most felt as usual. Even the kids,
Grown now and gone, are forgotten,
As though by habit. And he on the other side
Of the road, hooves braced among spurge and asphodel,
Tears the gray grass at its roots, his massive horns
Tossing delicately, as by long habit, as by
Habit learned, or without other knowledge
And without question inherited, or found
As first he found the air, the first daylight, first milk at the tetter,
The paths, the pen, the seasons. They are white, these two,
As we should say these are white who remember nothing,
And we for our uses call that innocence,

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So that our gracelessness may have the back of a goat
To ride away upon; so that when our supreme gesture
Of propitiation has obediently been raised
It may be the thicket-snared ram that dies instead of the son;
So even that we may frame the sense that is now
Into a starred figure of last things, of our own
End, and there by these beasts know ourselves
One from another: some to stay in the safety
Of the rock, but many on the other hand
To be dashed over the perilous brink. There is no need
Even that they should be gentle, for us to use them
To signify gentleness, for us to lift them as a sign
Invoking gentleness, conjuring by their shapes
The shape of our desire, which without them would remain
Without a form and nameless. For our uses
Also are a dumbness, a mystery,
Which like a habit stretches ahead of us
And was here before us; so, again, we use these
To designate what was before us, since we cannot
See it in itself, for who can recognize
And call by true names, familiarly, the place
Where before this he was, though for nine months
Or the world's full age he housed there? Yet it seems
That by such a road, arriving from out of sight,
From nowhere we know, we may have come, and these
Figure as shapes we may have been. Only, to them
The road is less than a road, though it divides them,
A bit of flat space merely, perhaps not even
A thing that leads elsewhere, except when they
Are driven along it, for direction is to them
The paths their own preference and kind have made
And follow: routes through no convenience
And world of ours, but through their own sense
And mystery. Mark this; for though they assume
Now the awkward postures of illustrations
For all our parables, yet the mystery they stand in
Is still as far from what they signify
As from the mystery we stand in. It is the sign
We make of them, not they, that speaks from their dumbness

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That our dumbness may speak. There in the thin grass
A few feet away they browse beyond words; for a mystery
Is that for which we have not yet received
Or made the name, the terms, that may enclose
And call it. And by virtue of such we stand beyond
Earthquake and wind and burning, and all the uncovenanted
Terror of becoming, and beyond the small voice; and on
Another hand, as it were a little above us
There are the angels. We are dumb before them, and move
In a different mystery; but may there be
Another road we do not see as a road: straight, narrow,
Or broad or the sector of a circle, or perhaps
All these, where without knowing it we stand
On one side or another? I have known such a way
But at moments only, and when it seemed I was driven
Along it, and along no other that my preference
Or kind had made. And of these others above us
We know only the whisper of an illusive sense,
Infrequent meanings and shadows, analogies
With light and the beating of wings. Yet now, perhaps only
A few feet away in the shaking leaves they wait
Beyond our words, beyond earthquake, whirlwind, fire,
And all the uncovenanted terror of becoming,
And beyond the small voice. Oh we cannot know and we are not
What we signify, but in what sign
May we be innocent, for out of our dumbness
We would speak for them, give speech to the mute tongues
Of angels. Listen: more than the sea's thunder
Foregathers in the gray cliff; the roots of our hair
Stir like the leaves of the holly bush where now
Not games the wind ponders, but impatient
Glories, fire: and we go suddenly
Stricken humble, and the covering of our feet
Offends, for the ground where we find we stand is holy.

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A Sparrow Sheltering Under a Column of the British Museum

Conceived first by whom? By the Greeks perfected,
By the Romans, the Renaissance and the Victorians copied,

Almost from the first more massive than our uses
And so indicating something more, the stone rises

Into the clear sunlight rare for a London January.
Why about columns does it seem always windy?

Still, he restores this one to bare use, convenient
For huddling between its base and pediment,

Where though the wind still ruffles him it is somewhat broken.
Porches are places of passage; and again

To us they indicate something beyond; to him
Its shape and position in the wind are the column.

And whereas to him the feet of children and scholars,
Who pass all day through the merely useful doors

To enquire of the rich uncertainty of their farthing,
Are not shaped like danger unless too near, may even bring

Crumbs to offer to a necessity
Which they both conciliate so differently,

(He, alive not to limits but presences,
They hungering less for shapes than significances)

Skelton's bird or Catullus's, or even
That pair whose fall figured our need of heaven

Would mean nothing to him, for he would never
Recognize them as now they are

Beyond doors there, where the wind is unknown,
But knows simply that this stone

Shelters, rising into the native air,
And that, though perhaps cold, he is at home there.

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The Wilderness

Remoteness is its own secret. Not holiness,
Though, nor the huge spirit miraculously avoiding
The way's dissemblings, and undue distraction or drowning
At the watercourses, has found us this place,

But merely surviving all that is not here,
Till the moment that looks up, almost by chance, and sees
Perhaps hands, feet, but not ourselves; a few stunted juniper trees
And the horizon's virginity. We are where we always were.

The secret becomes no less itself for our presence
In the midst of it; as the lizard's gold-eyed
Mystery is no more lucid for being near.

And famine is all about us, but not here;
For from the very hunger to look, we feed
Unawares, as at the beaks of ravens.

Her Wisdom

So is she with love's tenderness
Made tender—and touched tenderness is pain;
Pain in fit subject distorts or burns into wisdom—

That she both by usual things and presences
Too delicate for usual ears and eyes
At all hands is touched and made wise,

Being instructed by stones of their rough childhoods,
In the migratory tides of birds seeing the cold
Hand of the moon and the shape of their shore;

She suffers too the noise of night's shadow flexing
Invisible in the unrustling air of noon,
With a sound between parchment stretched and a bat's squeak;

Is aware at all hours of the scream and sigh
Of shadows, of each moment: things forever violated,
Forever virgin; hears sleep falling wherever it falls.

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Such understanding, uncommunicable
To other senses, and seeming so simple,
Is more a mystery than things not known at all;

For pain is common, but learned of not often,
Taught never; and who, could she speak it,
Would have ears to hear? She would not if she could,

Because of her tenderness. But should
Love's wisdom so wound her that she die,
Would the knowledge then to which she succumbed

Most resemble the fear which we hear in the leaves' falling,
Hope as it falters in our failing questions,
Or joy as it overtakes us even in pain?

Senility Cay

Like a nail-paring cast from the moon's leprosy
The beach sheens white to the moon's tooth;
All the birds are dying along the sand, you would say
A camp croaking feeble with a fever;
Gray grass twitching like cheeks, and the scurf
Crawling dry on the palsied sea.
Not a sail there. Not a face in sight. But here
Thin as a fish-bone, left open so it stares
Is the gaunt gap where what was a man will be.

Several Distiches about an Occasion

i
In three words, am I lost? This figure of loss
Dances with too many feet in the same place.

ii
Who fancies himself found and, words his wayside,
Sits in their hollowness and calls it shade?

iii
Politeness studies the fashion of flapping
From a vain bird whose egg was more edifying.

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iv
In my rudeness I heard, "Trim, little one, to this wisdom:
There are right and wrong tails under which to keep warm."

v
Sailing to Greenland in a daft straw,
Clothes too cargoed me. See: I go raw.

Two Paintings by Alfred Wallis

I—*Voyage to Labrador*

Tonight when the sea runs like a sore,
Swollen as hay and with the same sound,
Where under the hat-dark the iron
Ship slides seething, hull crammed
With clamors the fluttering hues of a fever,
Clang-battened in, the stunned bells done
From the rung-down quartans, and only
The dotty lights still trimmed
Abroad like teeth, there dog-hunched will the high
Street of hugging bergs have come
To lean huge and hidden as women,
Untouched as smoke and, at our passing, pleased
Down to the private sinks of their cold.
Then we will be white, all white, as cloths sheening,
Stiff as teeth, white as the sticks
And eyes of the blind. But morning, mindless
And uncaring as Jesus, will find nothing
In that same place but an empty sea
Colorless, see, as a glass of water.

II—*Schooner under the Moon*

Waits where we would almost be. Part
Pink as a tongue; floats high on the olive
Rumpled night-flood, foresails and clouds hiding
Such threat and beauty as we may never see.

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ROBERT GRAVES

Peasant Poet

SINCE THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY IN ENGLAND poetry has been a dangerous trade for those without any other resources but the poetic gift. They soon come up against the paradox that a poet cannot keep this gift if he caters for contemporary taste but that, unless he does so, or unless he dies tragically young, his poems are likely to take at least thirty years before they reach any but the most limited and uninfluential public.

If poetry were not so exacting in its demands on a poet's time and energy, the case would be different. But once a poem forms in his mind and demands to be taken through the necessary stages until its completion, he must obey. And if he has neither inherited means, nor a patron, nor a sinecure, how is his allegiance to poetry reconcileable with his bread and butter job? Ideally, he feels, a poet should be his own master, of sacrosanct person, and privileged to expect hospitality and maintenance wherever he goes. But since ours is not that sort of world, what is he to do? Should he die young and offer promise for performance? It is remarkable how many poets succeed in dying young, even when they have not deliberately pressed the trigger or swallowed poison. Or force himself upon the public by a manifesto or some even more sensational means? That would be undignified, and the public is hard to fool. Or postpone the completion of his poetic career until the statutory thirty years have elapsed? That would mean smothering the poetic impulse meanwhile. Or marry a rich wife? Difficult; rich women tend to marry men who are already worldly successes. Or somehow contrive to keep bread in his mouth by finding a negligent employer, or by doing hack jobs at home? But thirty years is a long stretch.

John Clare found the dilemma more than usually cruel. He was mouse-poor, quite without influence or connexions, and though his first book of poems (1820) proved immediately successful, it sold well only because Taylor, his publisher, who had come across his work by accident, was billing him truthfully enough as an 'English peasant poet'. Clare became a nine days' wonder. He had clay on his boots, hay-seed in his hair, genius in his eye, spoke as charmingly odd a dialect as Burns, yet had the ability to forge a neat, melodious pastoral rhyme that would not have disgraced Robert Bloomfield, William Cowper, or even the great William Wordsworth, self-elected High Priest of Nature. Visitors came in coaches from London to the remote village of Helpstone where they gaped at this miraculous son of toil, a rival sideshow to his contemporary, the industrious legless-armless Miss Biffin, who threaded needles and worked samplers with her lips and teeth alone (poor creature!). Clare (poor creature!) similarly transcended the disadvantages of birth, environment and education,

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and though his biographers suggest that he disliked the label of 'Peasant Poet', this is not altogether true. He wrote an autobiographical poem under that title, and in his *Village Minstrel* romanticized himself as a Spenserian 'Lubin':

Young Lubin was a peasant from his birth;
His sire a hind born to the flail and plough,
To thump the corn out and to till the earth,
The coarsest chance which nature's laws allow—
To earn his living by a sweating brow;
Thus Lubin's early days did rugged roll,
And mixt in timely toil—but e'en as now,
Ambitious prospects fired his little soul,
And fancy soared and sung, 'bove poverty's control.

The *Village Minstrel* appeared in his second volume, which sold badly. The third and fourth volumes (1827 and 1835) were dismal failures, but not because Clare refused to cater for popular taste. This is made plain by J. W. Tibble's splendid two-volume edition of the *Poems* (Dent, 1935). Here is the peasant poet writing for the 'Keepsake' public by imitating Burns:

Ay, little larky! what's the reason,
Singing thus in winter season?
Nothing, surely, can be pleasing
To make thee sing;
For I see naught but cold and freezing,
And feel its sting.

Sir John Harrington:

Love and thy vain employs, away
From this too oft deluded breast!
No longer will I court thy stay,
To be my bosom's teasing guest.
Thou treacherous medicine, reckoned pure,
Thou quackery of the harassed heart,
That kills what it pretends to cure,
Life's mountebank thou art.

and Crabbe:

Some of the old school yet my verse could tell;
And one from boyhood I remember well,
Who ne'er aspired on folly's wings to soar,
A plain, mean man, scarce noticed from the poor,
Who ne'er expected, as he walked the street,
Bows from inferiors whom he chanced to meet;

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Inferiors, bred from fashion's idle whim,
Equals and neighbours all appeared to him;
And tho' wealth scorned in such low walks to go,
And pride disdained and called his manners low,
He sought nor paid pride's homage unto man,
But lived unshining in his humble plan;
And when his rights tyrannic power assailed,
His courage triumphed tho' his pocket failed. . .

And here he is making obeisance to the aristocratic Augustan tradition which had reasserted its sway at the defeat of revolutionary France:

TO MY OATEN REED

Thou warble wild, of rough, rude melody,
How oft I've woo'd thee, often thrown thee by!
In many a doubtful rapture touching thee,
Waking thy rural notes in many a sigh:
Fearing the wise, the wealthy, proud and high,
Would scorn as vain thy lowly ecstasy,
Deeming presumptuous thy uncultur'd themes.
Thus vainly courting Taste's unblemish'd eye,
To list a simple labourer's artless dreams. . .

Unless a poet could take his place naturally and gracefully at a gentleman's table, cut or keep out of sight his plebeian connexions, and move to Town, he might not hope for advancement. But what could be done with Clare, however untainted by Jacobinism and however obligingly he tuned his oaten reed? He had married Patty Turner, a poor illiterate fellow-villager, merely to make an honest woman of her; now lived in an insanitary cottage full of ragged, ailing brats; worked as a day labourer; and never hankered for city life. The fashionable sightseers who visited Helpstone paid no shilling entrance fee for the privilege of wasting Clare's time; they scattered a few compliments, wrinkled their noses at the sour smell of poverty and drove away again. Their visits, like his week-long rhyming fits, merely discouraged the local farmers from giving him steady employment. Clare slowly went to pieces under the strain. In the introduction to his new Selection[1] of the poems, James Reeves writes:

> There was a general slump in the sales of poetry. Many of the magazines which were glad enough to print Clare's poems forget to pay for them. Taylor, whatever his will and intentions, managed Clare's money disastrously. His was a somewhat complicated nature, which it would be wrong to judge harshly. He probably did not cheat Clare of

[1]John Clare: *Selected Poems.* Edited by James Reeves. Heinemann, 7/6.

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> his earnings deliberately, but the record of his book-keeping is not creditable to him. What it is difficult to forgive Taylor and the others of Clare's patrons in the world of literature and fashion is their failure to understand his economic need; this was for no more than a competent handling of his affairs to enable him to gain a small though regular income. The part that simple financial anxiety can play in mental collapse was less generally understood then than it is now. It was, however, the opinion expressed by Dr. Allen, keeper of the private asylum where Clare was first confined, that all that was needed to restore his mental balance was the assurance of a regular income however small.

A fund was, indeed, raised to keep him afloat, but this proved insufficient to feed and clothe his family of seven children. And though it is true that an adequate income might have kept him from sinking so deep into the trough of melancholy, it would not have assuaged his loneliness. The only cure for his disease would have been the society of fellow-poets. Yet it was not until about the year 1830, when he grew weary of courting 'Taste's unblemish'd eye', that he graduated as a true poet. He had by now been granted a dream vision of the White Goddess of Poetry, and henceforth his companions should have been those who bore her seal on their brows.

> These dreams of a beautiful presence, a woman deity, gave the sublimest conceptions of beauty to my imagination; and being last night with the same presence, the lady divinity left such a vivid picture of her visits in my sleep, dreaming of dreams, that I could no longer doubt her existence. So I wrote them down to prolong the happiness of my faith in believing her my guardian genius.

But where, then, were his fellow-poets? In 1820 there had been talk of an exchange of poetic opinions between Clare and Keats, who knew the Goddess as *La Belle Dame Sans Merci,* and that might have done both of them a deal of good. Keats, born a Cockney, criticized an early nature poem of Clare's by saying that 'the Description too much prevailed over the sentiment'; whereas Clare wrote of Keats: 'He often described Nature as she appeared to his fancies and not as he would have described her had he witnessed the things he described.' This meeting had never come off and now Keats was dead, and so was Shelley; and Clare's friendships with Darley, Lamb and Cary, limited to letters and very occasional visits, died away.

Clare seems to have stumbled accidentally upon the solution to his dilemma; perhaps he found it in the *Book of Samuel,* where David escaped from the Philistines by feigning madness. The best way to discourage unwelcome well-wishers was casually to identify himself with Lord Byron or with Tom Cribb, the prize-fighter; such deceitful fictions soon scattered them. But being already cut off from village society by presuming above his station, he found that the loneliness increased:

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> I live here among the ignorant like a lost man in fact like one whom the rest seems careless of having anything to do with—they hardly dare talk in my company for fear I should mention them in my writings & I find more pleasure in wandering the fields then in mixing among my silent neighbours who are insensible of everything but toiling & talking of it & that to no purpose.

The distressed Patty was not his equal, either in intellect or sensibility, and as an anodyne he took to deceiving himself with another sort of fiction. He contrived to believe that he was really married to Mary Joyce, a farmer's daughter four years younger than himself, with whom he had been passionately in love as a boy, but whom he had never aspired to marry. She became his pastoral Muse, the perpetual Other Woman. After the failure of his fourth book in 1835, he turned his back on reality and lived more and more in the lost world of his boyhood, peopled only by beasts, birds and Mary. In 1837, his London friends sent him to a private mental home in Epping Forest, from which he ran away in 1841; but six months later, by order of the local gentry whom he had libellously lampooned in *The Parish,* he was confined to Northampton General Lunatic Asylum, where he remained until his death in 1864.

Clare's lunacy, being self-inflicted, was only partial—as when recruits shoot off their trigger fingers rather than put bullets through their heads. It did not affect his poetic capacity—if, as it seems, he wrote and talked certifiable nonsense merely to impress visitors. Though he ceased from satire or such low-life ballads as *The Helpstone Statutes,* he broke quite new ground in *The Dying Child* and the a-metric *Pleasant Sounds:*

> *The rustling of leaves under the feet in woods and under hedges;*
> *The crumping of cat-ice and snow down wood-rides, narrow lanes, and every street causeway;*
> *Rustling through a wood or rather rushing, while the wind halloos in the oak-top like thunder;*
> *The rustle of birds' wings startled from their nests or flying unseen into the bushes;*
> *The whizzing of larger birds overhead in a wood, such as crows, puddocks, buzzards;*
> *The trample of robins and woodlarks on the brown leaves, and the patter of squirrels on the green moss. . .*

and his 'I am, but what I am who cares or knows?' and 'I lost the Love of Heaven' are already among the recognized glories of English poetry. James Reeves, whose selection of Clare's poems could hardly be bettered, has chosen proportionately as many from the asylum poems as from those of the middle period, when he first began to find himself. Since in those days warders had stopped flogging lunatics, and doctors had not yet developed drastic therapeutic training or shock treatment, he had a less unhappy time than might be sup-

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posed—at any rate, until the governors decided to deny even harmless inmates leave to wander freely about the town, and so turned an asylum into a prison.

How good was Clare? At his best he was very good indeed, with a natural simplicity supported by a remarkable sense of language; meant what he said, considered it well before he wrote it down, and wrote with love. When he was not good, he was no worse than any other not-good poet of his time: most of his poems were about Nature because, after all, he had never been anything but a countryman and described only what he knew. Few things bore me more than the Countryman's Diary featured in the London press today:

> Now the triangular seedpods of the great meazle ripen autumn-brown under the mellow Martinmas sun and great companies of Turton's Wendletrap—which the countryman readily distinguishes from the Common Wendletrap by its ecstatic *weet-woot* and its long prehensile toe—perch on the haulms and crack the scarlet seeds with a noise like fairy artillery; while from a neighbouring coppice. . .

Clare wrote a great deal of descriptive verse about the nesting habits of particular birds, about wild animals and insects, and about country people as part of the landscape. But he never bores me: he is always precise and technically admirable. And he had acquired the most unusual faculty of knowing exactly how and when to end a poem. His obsession with Nature made him think of a poem as a living thing, rather than an artifact, or a slice cut from the cake of literature. Take these essays on the vixen and the hedgehog:

Among the taller wood with ivy hung,
The old fox plays and dances round her young.
She snuffs and barks if any passes by
And swings her tail and turns prepared to fly.
The horseman hurries by, she bolts to see,
And turns agen, from danger never free.
If any stands she runs among the poles
And barks and snaps and drives them in the holes.
The shepherd sees them and the boy goes by
And gets a stick and prongs the hole to try.
They get all still and lie in safety sure,
And out again when everything's secure,
And start and snap at blackbirds bouncing by
To fight and catch the great white butterfly.

*

. . . He makes a nest and fills it full of fruit,
On the hedge bottom hunts for crabs and sloes
And whistles like a cricket as he goes.

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It rolls up like a ball or shapeless hog [log?]
When gipsies hunt it with their noisy dog;
I've seen it in their camps—they call it sweet,
Though black and bitter and unsavoury meat.

I find myself repeating whole poems of Clare's without having made a conscious effort to memorize them. And though it was taken as a symptom of madness that he one day confided in a visitor: 'I know Gray—I know him well,' I shall risk saying here, with equal affection: 'I know Clare; I know him well. We have often wept together.'

GEORGE McFADDEN

The Rake's Progress: A Note on the Libretto

MR. JOSEPH KERMAN, IN HIS EXCELLENT APPRECIATION of the Stravinsky-Auden opera, *The Rake's Progress* (HUDSON REVIEW, Winter, 1954), several times acknowledges difficulties in the libretto. Mr. Kerman even suggests that the ending be re-written. Before agreeing with such a suggestion, however, a re-reading of the libretto in the light of Auden's recent interests seems justified; especially if (as I believe) it can be demonstrated that the difficulties are susceptible of a not very recondite explanation and that the libretto as a whole contains much which the critics seem to have missed.

Mr. Kerman is at the heart of the question when he says, "the very conception of Auden's Tom Rakewell has stuck in the throat of many critics; for them he is not significantly a rake at all." Tom, Mr. Kerman continues, "is someone much more complicated, more a figure for our time," though he doubts whether it is possible today to make him a comic figure.

I would agree both with the critics and with Mr. Kerman. Tom is not a rake; his progress is from unconscious guilt to consciousness of sin, illustrating Kierkegaard's remark, "the sentimental conception of the child's innocence forgets that Christianity recognizes no such thing in the fallen race, and that the qualitative dialectic defines sin-consciousness as an advance upon innocence" (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 524). Therefore, Mr. Kerman is right in saying that Tom is potentially a more interesting figure (because more conscious) than a mere compulsively erotic Don Juan. But the fact that Tom's progress is toward greater spiritual realization does entitle his story to be called a comedy, in Dante's sense at least. As for the rest of Mr. Kerman's

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difficulties, I should like to postpone considering them until I have clarified the fable as a whole.

Inspiration for *The Rake's Progress* came from Hogarth's series of eight paintings, done in 1735. It was the final scene in Bedlam, with a maniac playing the fiddle, that first gave Stravinsky the idea for the opera. As befitted the historical eighteenth century artist, with his subordination of *delectare* to *prodesse,* Hogarth's intention was to admonish directly by example. So, as he tells us in his *Memoirs,* he made his warning scenes explicit by painting them "similar to representations on the stage," and he then engraved these "modern moral subjects," hoping that they would "both entertain and improve the mind" of the general public. In the libretto which Auden furnished at Stravinsky's invitation, Hogarth has been treated with great freedom. Of his original eight scenes, only two appear in the opera, the bordello and Bedlam. Where Hogarth starts his young heir on the brimstone trail in a chamber cluttered with the effects of his newly-deceased father, a miser, Auden begins in an Eden-like country garden, on a May afternoon in "*an* Eighteenth Century England."

I have underlined the "an" because it is significant. It appears in the original English edition of the libretto, but not in the American (both by Boosey and Hawkes). It points up the contrast between Hogarth's intention and Auden's. For, despite the fact that Hogarth is realistic, grimly satirical, and explicit in his pillorying of vice, and Auden on the other hand almost trifling in his presentation of what might seem hardly more than a fairy tale enlivened by a few grotesqueries and sweetened by three or four lovely lyrics, yet the new *Rake's Progress* is for us a tale to be taken to heart more seriously than its historical forerunner. For Auden's "Eighteenth Century England" is within each of us, at least as a possibility.

Hogarth was engaged in the rather simple project of pointing out to the gentlemen of his day that they would be wise to resist carelessness, extravagance, drunkenness, debt, lechery, and gambling—because these vices, besides being ugly in their circumstances, would undoubtedly be painful in their effects, and might well lead to prison and the madhouse. The demand made upon them was immediately obvious: to avoid being like this miserable object, Tom Rakewell.

The task to which Auden addresses himself is not so simple. He writes for a society in which unselfish public service, as well as wild profligacy, has led to the asylum; a society in which innocence seems to be at home behind the bars and the barbed wire; a society so desperately lacking in any bond of love that its members seem to resemble atoms in a void. His task is to enable us to find a subjective bond with Tom, to see ourselves in him, despite the sense of isolation which is the mark of modern man. The difficulty of bringing about this communication by any but indirect means accounts for what seems to be

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flippancy on Auden's part. Above all he wishes to avoid objectifying Tom, and for that reason he pierces our guard with light thrusts.

The good bourgeois of the eighteenth century, and the gentlemen too, admitted the force of Hogarth's denunciation. What is more important, they agreed upon the nature of the cure: more prudence, more common sense. Now we find it easy to denounce but almost impossible to agree on a cure, though we do agree that prudence is not enough.

The precise nature of the cure offered by Auden has so far not been fully attended to. The cure is redemption through love, or rather charity, in the special sense of good will directed toward the real world of God's creation. Auden's personification of this love is Rakewell's sweetheart, Anne Trulove. Auden says she represents "the real world from which he flies but can never forget" (*Harper's Bazaar,* Feb., 1953, p. 165). As Scene One of his series, Hogarth merely showed young Tom, while he is being measured for his mourning, offering money to a simple girl whom he is throwing over; and in the final scene he showed the same girl, still loyal, visiting the chained madman in Bedlam. Auden's Anne, however, is made more important by her deep Christian piety, her love for Tom which transcends desire, and by Tom's delusion that he is Adonis and she Venus (this mythical identification is the chief means which Auden uses to relate Anne to "the real world," as I shall show later).

Auden's chief character invention is a figure combining the functions of Mephistopheles and Leporello—Nick Shadow, who is literally the Devil. He tells Tom of his inheritance from an unknown uncle, offers his services for the usual year and a day, prompts Tom to each of his misdeeds, and, when he has accomplished his victim's ruin, demands his soul. There is an exciting scene in which Tom bests him in a fairy-story test in which Tom, against all probability, twice calls upon Anne as the Queen of Hearts. Nick sinks defeated into Hell, but as a final act of malice he curses Tom with insanity.

A much less conventional figure is Baba the Turk, an artiste whose great success with the public is founded upon the possession of a huge and genuine black beard. At Nick Shadow's suggestion, Rakewell marries Baba. He does it as a defiant expression of self-will and freedom—anyone can marry for money or love; the only reason for a man's marrying a bearded lady is that he wants to. Once married, however, his freedom is over. When Baba moves in with her collection of amazing objects, souvenirs of her admirers all over Europe (things, realities, from which Tom is in flight), she tries to be kind to Tom; but he obviously hates her, and interrupts one of her tantrums by extinguishing her with a wig, so that she remains as if in a spell during the remainder of the scene while Nick shows Tom "The Machine"—a remarkable new device which manufactures bread out of stones and can be relied upon to liberate and reform society. In the next act we learn that the machine is a failure, Tom a bankrupt, and we see the Crowd attending an auction of Baba's

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objects, hidden now under many layers of cobwebs and dust. Baba awakens from her charmed sleep, too late to save any of her possessions; but with a kind word to Anne she sweeps theatrically off, telling the Crowd that the next time they see her they will have to pay.

I can imagine children watching these goings-on with complete absorption. Adults may find them a bit arbitrary, and demand an explanation. Since Auden calls his libretto "a fable," its explanation should not be too far-fetched. Nor is it, if only one appreciates Auden's preoccupation with the Christian existentialists, such as St. Augustine, Pascal, and especially Kierkegaard—who, after all, have become remarkably well-known during the last thirty years, and who may well become as much a part of twentieth-century literary expression as the German idealists were of the nineteenth.

The moral of *The Rake's Progress* is that the natural man hates Nature, as Auden himself once said (crediting St. Augustine with the first observation of this truth), and that he wants above all to be free—free of ties to inanimate nature, as well as to his own human nature and to God. St. Augustine did not want the pears he stole, he wanted to be free in stealing them; Tom does not want Baba the Turk, he wants to be free in marrying. "O Nature," he had already declared, "green unnatural mother, how I have followed where you led. . . . No ploughman is more a slave to sun, moon and season than a gentleman to the clock of Fashion." But with Baba, Tom gets her collection of souvenirs, the "objects" (Rilke's *Dinge*) that surround man in his condition of "estrangement" from the world today. He hates them, he hates Baba, because for him (as for any natural man) they are unredeemed either by the grace of God or by the bond of human love in a community that responds to man's needs.

Tom's marriage, however, marks an important step in his progress. He leaves behind him the merely aesthetic level of life, which would have dictated the choice of a beautiful wife, for the "ethical" sphere of Kierkegaard, in which reason and will conquer the senses. Shadow puts it in Nietzschean terms:

> ". . . the giddy multitude are driven by the unpredictable Must of their pleasures and the sober few are bound by the inflexible Ought of their duty, between which slaveries there is nothing to choose. Would you be happy? Then learn to act freely. Would you act freely? Then learn to ignore those twin tyrants of appetite and conscience. . . . Take Baba the Turk to wife."

But in the Test scene, where Nick cuts the cards for Tom's soul, we find a situation described over and over by all the existentialists. Tom is at the end of his rope; he has nothing left—only a pack of cards. But this is precisely the condition of the "natural" man, according to Kierkegaard: living on the level of sense and feeling, living for the moment, awaiting an inevitable death, man's natural existence consists of fractions of time whose momentariness confronts

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despairingly the Nothing which surrounds such an existence. Tom's attempt to be at rest in an ethical system has failed with the fiasco of his bread-making machine. Now his game with Nick seems an employment by Auden of Pascal's famous "wager": Tom is left with one chance of an existence that transcends the moment, one chance to win eternity.

At this point Tom is inspired by Anne's offstage song to name a second time the Queen of Hearts, though Shadow had apparently removed it from the deck after helping Tom to guess it as the first card drawn. Tom's choice, therefore, is in defiance of reason and common sense. But it is the right one, and Tom is saved from Hell.

This scene illustrates more than one Kierkegaardian conception. Tom so far, as Shadow says, "loves sport, for sport is rare; the positive appalls him." The positive is the not-merely-immediate. But the dying-away from immediacy, says Kierkegaard, cannot be done with a once-for-all-time act. Because the individual is an existing individual, he must repeat his choice of a God-relationship (here the divinity symbolized by Anne) over and over again. Shadow seems to allude explicitly to this notion, known as "repetition":

> *The simpler the trick, the simpler the deceit;*
> *That there is no return, I've taught him well,*
> *And repetition palls him:*
> *The Queen of Hearts again shall be for him the Queen of Hell.*

And Tom's cry, "Renew my life, O Queen of Hearts, again" thus seems a "leap," in Kierkegaard's language, "into the absurd," such as is demanded of anyone who would pass from the ethical sphere to the religious one.

In addition, the insanity which afflicts Tom is of the sort which Kierkegaard attributes to the typical religious comic hero, Don Quixote:

> Don Quixote is the prototype for a subjective madness, in which the passion of inwardness embraces a particular finite fixed idea. . . . the tragic and the comic is that the something which is of such infinite concern to the unfortunate individual is a particular fixation which does not really concern anybody.[1]

The hallucination from which Tom suffers is a harmless one: that he is Adonis and Anne Venus. It affects him alone.

Tom, therefore, is not redeemed by Anne's love, but rather by his own love for her. The intensity of this inward choice is difficult to portray aesthetically, in an opera; yet it is expressed here by Tom's pathetic fixation. Auden's intention seems unmistakable in the light of an article of his which appeared in *Horizon* (August, 1949), shortly after he had delivered his libretto to

[1] *The Living Thoughts of Kierkegaard*, chosen and edited with an introduction by Auden, p. 122.

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Stravinsky. I quote two sentences: "Suddenly he [Don Quixote] goes mad, i.e., he sets out to become what he admires. Aesthetically this looks like pride; in fact, religiously, it is a conversion, an act of faith, a taking up of his cross." Tom's insanity is willed; Nick's curse (presented as a magic trick) is superfluous except to explain what is happening to Tom. Further, "each has to believe by himself," Auden declares in the same article. That is why Anne leaves Tom, not because of stern country morality (as Mr. Kerman fears). For of course, each must bear his own share of suffering. It would seem, then, that Auden regards *The Rake's Progress* as a drama involving not the Christian tragic hero (for he, as in the case of Othello, is damned), but a comedy with a "saint" for hero—only since the saint can hardly be made aesthetically interesting as he is, repetitive as his existence must be, Auden follows Cervantes in giving his hero the spectacular trait of madness. Thus Auden avoids the problem he feels Eliot failed to solve in *Murder in the Cathedral:* how to show dramatically that Becket's suffering came from devotion to religion rather than from his own pride.

Mr. Kerman suggests that it would be chic to re-write this ending as a sacrifice to the neo-classic pruning knife. Here he is unkind to Auden and Stravinsky, for if these two are chic it is because they have established fashions, not followed them. Auden's supposed chic has lain upon his reputation like a curse, and has probably prevented many from trying to understand him. But that is not his fault. Nor does it seem wise to suggest a return to reason for Tom (which involves an abandonment of the whole conception of his "progress") until we have had some more intimate and understanding productions of the opera than that furnished by the Metropolitan.

There are a few more points to be noted if our understanding of the fable is to get below the surface. In Tom, Auden also presents a socially representative specimen of the eighteenth century Englishman. He stands for the experience of society as well as of the individual. When he leaves Trulove's garden in Act I he acts for himself, as all natural men do. But when he "buries" his bearded wife under a huge wig, and drives all thought of her from his consciousness, he seems to be acting in a manner that has a direct reference to the history of the eighteenth century. It was then (as Newman pointed out) that, encouraged by the optimism of Shaftesbury and the deists, men began to ignore the Fall and to refuse to face the facts of human depravity. At the same time they substituted for the salutary fear of God the notions of respectability and shame which are the warp and woof of many psychoses today. So, if we want to see Baba now, we have to pay—$15 an hour, or whatever psychiatrists are charging at the moment. For Baba is, in a way, the lower nature which it is madness to hide, or at least to bury. Indeed, Sellem calls her "the it" as he auctions her off. Or we may think of the artiste Baba as a stage impersonator to whom we must look for images of ourselves.

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In the same manner, when Tom, in his new-found ethical enthusiasm, hopes to secure man from "want, the cause of crime" by his (or rather Shadow's) machine, to make earth "an Eden of good will" and lead men back into Paradise, we cannot resist thinking of the industrial revolution, which began in the eighteenth century, and of its failure to make men happier.

Perhaps less obvious is the function of the chorus—the "Crowd of Respectable Citizens." They behave as Auden says choruses behaved in Greek drama; that is, they flatter themselves by approving the average, by taking a somewhat cruel interest in the misfortunes of their betters, by "placing the blame"—most of all (and this is the characteristic of the modern Crowd) by refusing to respect any person as an individual. When Anne asks for news of Tom, the Crowd responds with some wild rumors and indicates its indifference to the real Tom by dismissing him with a few labels: "He's a Methodist!" "He's a Papist!" They respond gullibly to the auctioneer, Sellem, who disposes of a stuffed auk and a mounted pike as magical items of "value" which will assure success to their possessors. In this, too, we are reminded of the modern Crowd and of the magic spells of mass advertising.

Still less obvious is Auden's employment of the myth of Venus and Adonis. I hesitate to follow Mr. Kerman in his view that Auden is offering a Christian criticism of the Adonis myth. Generally speaking, Christian poets use myths for what they can get out of them, and leave it to the theologians to criticize. Auden seems to me to accept the myth wholeheartedly. Among the many points of reference between myth and libretto are the following. First, Adonis in the myth is his own enemy. In Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, Venus makes the accusation:

> *Is thine own heart to thine own face affected?*
> *Can thy right hand seize love upon thy left?*
> *Then woo thyself, be of thyself rejected,*
> *Steal thine own freedom, and complain on theft.*
> *Narcissus so himself himself forsook,*
> *And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.*

Tom laments

> *Always the quarry that I stalk*
> *Fades or evades me, and I walk*
> *An endless aisle of chandeliers*
> *In light that blinds, in light that sears,*
> *Reflected from a million smiles*
> *All empty as the country miles*
> *Of silly wood and senseless park;*
> *And only in my heart—the dark.*

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Tom has sought his own freedom and has lost everything; in rejecting everything else he had rejected himself. When Anne says to him in Bedlam, "Kiss me Adonis: the wild boar is vanquished," it is Tom's self-will she means; the wild boar which killed Adonis was the same boar that brought him to birth by ripping open the tree into which his mother, Smyrna, had been transformed by the gods. The love which Anne offers Tom, though he is unable to take advantage of it, is the love of Aphrodite (i.e. Venus) Urania, or Aphrodite Pandemos; that is, the love which unites husband, wife and family, and therefore, the generations and the whole community, in its bond. She is the Mother Goddess invoked by Shelley in *Adonais*.

This community united by the bond of love is the concern of much of Auden's poetry and prose. There is no such community today, except of course upon a relatively small scale. It is thus man's task to be "open" toward the world, the world of nature and of men, and to strengthen himself first of all in the love symbolized by Anne, upon whose basis genuine communities may be built.

Finally, as for Mr. Kerman's objection that the Epilogue smugly mocks the moralizing of the opera: when the moral is understood, the Epilogue merely re-inforces it. We are told that the only "Anne" most of us get is our duty, and Baba warns that all else (i.e., most of our normal behavior!) is theatre, that is, life on the plane of aesthetic immediacy. The "idle hands" which the Devil finds work for belong to those, like Tom, who are seeking nothing but their own freedom of will. True, the tone of the Epilogue is that of lighthearted raillery, but would any other be more effective at this point? When we hear the Epilogue, we have already had our chance to accept or reject the idea of redemption through charity. That the Epilogue seemed smug to Mr. Kerman is perhaps the fault of the whole Metropolitan production, lacking in intimacy and audience rapport. Properly done, the Epilogue ought to seem wryly ironic.

The achievement of Auden in *The Rake's Progress* (it seems to me a great achievement) is that he has worked the various elements of myth, fairy tale, and social allegory into a plot which holds together of itself and supports the music of Stravinsky with lyrics of a simple and classic beauty which it would be hard to match in modern English verse. If some of the ideas and allusions seem recondite now, for instance those drawn from Kierkegaard, the probability is that within ten years they will be in danger of becoming banal, so pervasive are they in the European thought of the last thirty years. In this event the lack of explicitness complained of in *The Rake's Progress* may be its salvation in the future.

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KUANGCHI C. CHANG

Poetry of the Sung Dynasty

SINCE THE TURN OF THIS CENTURY THE WEST HAS SHOWN a genuine appreciation of Chinese poetry, but this appreciation has been, on the whole, indifferently sustained and poorly directed. Thus the translations are generally disappointing and the attention of translators has been unduly confined to the poems of the ancient and classic periods.

Most Chinese poetry in Western translations comes from the Tang period (618-906). Poetry of the Sung dynasty (960-1279) is practically unknown in the West, a neglect which may be partially attributed to the lack of enthusiasm among the Chinese classic scholars themselves for any post-Tang poetry. True, few later poets can rival Li Po's brilliance or Tu Fu's reflective magnificence, but Chinese poetry would be a poor art if its splendor were so arbitrarily limited. The material grandeur of Tang gave way to the spiritual refinement of Sung. If the poetry of the former period is remarkable for its depth of emotion and strength of expression, Sung poetry excels in delicacy of perception and subtlety of imagery. Within their chosen limitations, both attained a high degree of perfection.

The Tang poet is bound to the world of man; his views are subjective, both retrospective and introspective. The Sung poet, on the other hand, is a poet of nature; his views are detached, often selfless; he submerges his identity, mentally and emotionally, in the being of nature, and takes joys and sorrows as they come and go: "the running brook and the floating clouds." This difference may be clearly seen in a comparison of two poems, both entitled "A Rural Visit"; the first by Tu Fu (Tang):

Snow covers the garrison posts
in the western hills;
The Wan-li Bridge spans the limpid
river to the south;
My brothers are scattered in the wind
and dust of the empire;
I shed my tears of loneliness
at the horizon's edge,
Having only life's sunset left
to nurse my ailments,
Without achievement to justify
the Court's patronage.

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I often ride out to the country and
gaze into the distance,
Hardly able to bear the mounting
desolation of human affairs.[1]

And the other by Weng Ling-shu (Sung):

An autumn-hued sky over a cool, bright cove,
With countless hills ranged far and near:
I come leisurely to visit the overflowing brook,
And suddenly see the blue peaks in the water.

A typically Chinese interest in nature is evident in both poems. But with this difference: while the Tang poet made nature merely the context of his own human drama, the Sung poet took nature as his drama's co-participant. It was indeed in the Sung dynasty that this interest in nature reached its highest refinement. Along with it there developed a sensitive metaphorical perception, and the Sung poets were masters in translating sensory impressions into verbal images. Take, for instance, the following two lines:

Sparse shadows crisscross a sheet
of limpid, shallow water;
A furtive fragrance afloat stirs
the moonlit twilight . . .

They come from a poem by Ling Ho-Ching—a great Sung poet—on plum blossoms: those flowers, particularly dear to the Chinese, which bloom in the late winter on gaunt branches, and whose subtle scent may best be savored in the evening-quiet. Other poets caught the moods of autumn and made quick sketches of their mountain trips:

The wind floats a fine spray of rain
as clean as the autumn itself;
The clouds let some scattered stars
fall and drift with the stream. (Cheng Hsia)

A pine tree gingerly clings to
a boulder by its roots;
The mountain trail twists
and turns with the creek. (Chao Pu-Chih)

A limpid pool is steeped mauve with the dawn;
The blue cliffs blanch as the clouds go by. (Yang Wan-Li)

Or described a winter night:

[1]All translations are by the present writer.

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Stilled are the hills, with chilled clouds wafer thin;
In the deserted span of sky a solitary moon shines;
A frosty sycamore spreads its shadows over the terrace;
Wind-swept leaves are heard rounding the colonnade. (Chang Lei)

But nature known perceptively, in pure intellectual awareness, would appear hard and cold if not enlivened by spiritual awareness, or intuition. Intuition seems to open the gate to an inner consciousness which transcends the rigid categories of knowledge. With perception and intuition, a Sung poet has fashioned the following poem:

SUMMER AFTERNOON

Fallen flowers are no offensive litter;
Singing birds make no infernal din;
Let the wild stream overrun the footpath
And the green hills barricade the gate!
As a magistrate I have the leisure of a hermit;
My office quarters are quieter than a hamlet.
I opened a volume, left unread—
It keeps turning its pages in the breeze. (Kung Ping-Chung)

In reading this poem, one feels the descent of a silent wall of restfulness blocking out the world; the last two lines leave the reader as it were on the verge of a spiritual awakening, of that subconscious awareness which Buddhists call the Enlightenment. And indeed, Buddhism was one of the sensible forces that moulded the delicacy of Sung poetry.

The Sung dynasty vacillated interminably between half-hearted resistance to and weak-kneed appeasement of its powerful and aggressive neighbors to the north; in the face of this perpetual political chaos, the scholars gradually withdrew from the world of human affairs. They took refuge in seclusion, and in the order and harmony of the natural world. Many of them took up the study of Buddhist philosophy. Their ready response to this philosophy and their traditional interest in nature combined to give rise to a new school of Buddhism, known as the Chan (or the Zen as the Japanese call it).

The central theme of Buddhist philosophy as taught in ancient India is that in our universe there is a Universal Self which is the *One,* eternal and real; that there are the separate things, such as mountains, rivers, flowers, birds, etc., which are the *Many,* transient and illusive; and that man, who is one of the Many, can attain Nirvana only by surrendering his separate self to the Universal Self. When Buddhism was transplanted to China and fertilized by native Chinese philosophies, it bloomed anew. It has been said that the non-Buddhist sees the mountains, rivers, flowers and birds as what they appear to be, that to the Indian Buddhist they are no longer mountains, rivers, flowers and birds,

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but that to the Chinese Buddhist these things are once again what they appear, only with greater and deeper meanings because they are now seen as manifestations of the Universal Self. It was this aspect of Zen philosophy that appealed to the Sung poet. He did not bypass his physical world as the Indian Buddhist did; instead, he took a good look at it and found it interesting. His keen perception made him nature's appreciative critic; his deep intuition made him its lover.

EN ROUTE TO LUNG HSIN

From the gulley's banks
golden chysanthemums dangle;
Around the mountain citadel
flaming maples surge;
The travelers scramble for
the little ferry boat;
Their horses wade
by the flat sandy shoal. (Tiao Chung-Chih)

Here, poetry is painting; the picture is vivid in composition, with its color scheme and activity of human figures—and not least with the detail of the horses wading by the shoal, a subtle touch buttressing the natural atmosphere of the whole.

SAILING THROUGH THE GORGES

Our boat going upstream barely moves
by the inch;
The dark cliffs on both sides deepen
into the dusk's gloom.
With a clap of thunder the heavens
threaten rain;
A wind rushing in from the South Seas
beyond the horizon
Angrily blasts the gorges asunder—
A hundred men shout and
beat the big drums,
While a single swain flies
up the towering mast.
When the sails are rigged, all hold
their hands in their sleeves
And sit down to watch their boat—
a goose feather skimming over the water.
(Yang Wan-Li)

And here, poetry is drama; the play is complete with its plot, suspense, climax

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and exodus, a happy one too; there is good theatre in the gesture of the men who hold their hands in their sleeves. For in sheer aesthetic perception, the Sung poet and the Sung painter are one, and it was no mere coincidence that painting emerged as China's supreme art in the Sung dynasty.

En Route to Hsiang-Yi

The boat, flushed with the flurries of flowers on the banks,
Glides past a hundred li of elm-lined quay in half a day's wind.
Lying on the deck, I watch a sky of motionless clouds,
Not realizing they are also heading east along with me. (Chen Yü-Yi)

Days

For days the autumn winds cheated me in my illness:
They have blown down all the golden foliage in my courtyard;
And the distant hills allowed to peep through the thinned grove
Are again half hidden by the clouds! (Chao Shih-Hsiu)

On a Rainy Day

In quest of flowers in the village
I looked everywhere in vain;
Perhaps had there been some, they
would depress me just the same.
Better I pillow my head and listen
to the spring's mountain rain,
A movement of allegro,
a movement of adagio. (Yang Wan-Li)

In all these verses, the poet's perceptive fibers are spun fine to mesh the imaginative mind. However, there is a petulance in "Days" and a tone of ennui in "On a Rainy Day", and we sense a disquiet because the poet's emotions color his understanding of nature. We may say that he still dwells on the personal plane. Not until he liberates himself from himself do we find him rising to that universal plane where he may be one with nature in entire harmony. And incidentally, the *tzu*, a unique literary product of Sung, a kind of song-patterned verse of unequal lines, leaned heavily on moods as such, and never quite left that personal plane.

In the following poems we feel that the Sung poet has gone a long way on the road of intuition; he can now condone the wayward bamboos, chide the extravagant east wind and feel compassion for the aging spring. But still, in the eyes of the Zen philosopher, he has not yet arrived; for in Zen, intellectual illumination must kindle from the evacuation of the emotions.

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A Bamboo Grove

Treasuring his grove of bamboos, the owner
Fenced them in to protect their wintry green;
But he had not reckoned with their waywardness—
They insisted on sprouting out through the fence.

(Yang Wan-Li)

Return to the Hills

Away from the hills and back again,
I follow the road along the stream.
The east wind is a spendthrift—
The blooms are full-blown overnight! (Chen Yü-Yi)

Spring Excursion to Feng-Lo Pavilion

Over the flowering trees and blue hills the sun is lowering;
The grass on the wide open plain is boundlessly green.
The excursionists, paying no attention to the aging spring,
Come and go trampling the fallen petals outside the pavilion.

(Ou-Yang Hsiu)

There is a well-known Zen anecdote which runs like this. The aged master of a Zen sect was one day urged by his disciples to choose his successor, and among them there was one conceded to be the undisputed candidate. So the master commanded him in a test of wisdom to express his understanding of Zen in a short poem, and this disciple produced the following:

The Bodhi-tree is the body;
A clear mirror is the mind.
Cleanse both constantly—
Let no dust fall on them.

The master was not satisfied, sensing that this disciple had not yet thoroughly grasped the spirit of Zen. In the meanwhile, an unknown monk in the monastery heard about the test and submitted his version:

The body is no Bodhi-tree;
The mind is no clear mirror.
As there is nothing at all,
Whereupon can any dust fall?

This unknown monk, whose name was Hui Neng, was of course chosen by the master as his successor, and later became one of the outstanding figures in Zen Buddhism. But such is said to be the manner of understanding Zen. The spark of understanding comes suddenly like a flash of lightning that reveals

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unsuspected sights in the darkness. This impact of intuition is very evident in Sung poetry:

ON A SPRING DAY

If you are drunk with springtime,
don't blame it on the wine;
When you roam in the country,
there is no use for directions.
Where does the blue sky end?
A white bird vanishes into the void. (Yang Wan-Li)

THE BAMBOOS

The temple's leaning fence
corrals a thousand poles of jade;
The mountain path threads
through ten thousand more.
I just recall in the great
mansions of the rich
There on the plastered walls are
sometimes painted a few shoots.
(Ling Ho-Ching)

The flavor of Zen is very marked in the first poem, more subtle in the second. The spirit of Zen is spontaneous intuition itself. The least application of directed reasoning will bar the flow of that spirit, and what might be spontaneous intuition will become conscious effort. So only when the smouldering smoke of emotion disappears and the flickering lights of conscious effort quiet down, does Sung poetry glow with the radiance of a flameless fire:

LEAVING THE HILLS

From under the shaded palisades
ignorant of the fair day
I run into the morning sun
at the turn of the road;
As my solitary walk emerges
from the tall bamboos,
A cliff leaps a thousand feet blue! (Chen Yü-Yi)

WEATHER TURNING FAIR TOWARDS EVENING

Unaware of the weather turning
fair during my quiet nap,

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I caught sight of the slanting
sun on the mast top;
Pulling on a wrap, I rose
and looked around:
Over the horizon the peaks were
dashing out in a race. (Chen Yü-Yi)

A Summer Shower

Dark clouds of spilt ink have
barely blacked out the peaks,
When shiny rain in pearls
tumbles dancing into my boat.
As suddenly, a gust of wind
off the land blows all away—
Under the Wang Hu Pavilion the
lake is the color of the sky. (Su Tung-Po)

The *tzu,* to which I made a passing reference above, is a kind of rhymed verse in which the lengths of the lines and the tonal inflections of the words are patterned to fit the music of some ancient melody. There were a number of such ancient melodies adopted for the *tzu,* but the actual musical scores of these melodies have long been lost; only their patterns of line-lengths and word-tones are extant. So a *tzu* may be called a song without music; and composing a *tzu* is, hence, often referred to as "filling in a song pattern".

First attempts at this literary "stunt" appeared as early as the Tang dynasty (Li Po himself had tried it), but it was the poetic genius of the last ruler of Southern Tang[2] that provided the stimulation necessary to bring the *tzu* to its full bloom in the Sung era. In later times, Tang *shih* (poetry proper) and Sung *tzu* (song-patterned verse) are cited as two parallel achievements in the history of Chinese literature—parallel perhaps, but not equal, for the *tzu* with its narrowly channeled emotional flow poured into mechanically set moulds can never compare with the *shih* in breadth, freedom and spontaneity. However, the *tzu* at its best does possess an artistry which is appealing. Here are two songs by Li Yuh, the last ruler of Southern Tang:

(1)

Speechless, alone, I ascended the
western tower:
The moon is like a sickle;
The deserted seclusion of the sycamore
court imprisons a tranquil autumn.

[2]One of the Minor Dynasties of the brief transitional period, 906-960, between the Tang and Sung dynasties.

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Cut but not to be severed,
Disentangled only to be more entangled:
That is the grief of separation;
It leaves an indescribable taste on
the palate of one's heart.

(2)

The rain mumbles on outside the curtain;
The spirit of spring is aging;
Silk covers withstand not the dawn's chill;
The sleeper, knowing not in his dream
he is a visitor,
Indulges in pleasures of the moment.

Alone, lean not over the railing!
There, a boundless kingdom,
So easily parted with, will be hard
to return to.
When the spring departs with the flowing
stream and fallen flowers,
It will be heaven and earth, worlds apart!

These lines commemorate the passing of a king's glory. Few poets could match the royal composer in delicacy of feeling, and certainly none exercised his extravagance of writing off the loss of a kingdom with a few exquisite words.

Next, a *tzu* by Li Ching-Chao, one of China's great poetesses and, incidentally, the best woman composer in this form. The subject is unrequited love (her husband traveled much and died early):

The wind has stopped and laid down the scented
dust, the flowers are gone;
The day is late—I am too weary to do my hair.
Things *remain the same but men and women do not,*
And all is in vain.
Before I can say a word, tears flow.

I hear the spring is still fair in Shuan-Chi,
And I may go there, a-sailing—
Only afraid that the tiny sampans of Shuan-Chi
Can not carry
So much grief.

And finally, two examples from Lu Yu, a Sung *tzu* composer who was the most prolific poet in Chinese literature:

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(1)

Remembering her rosy, cream-smooth hands,
The amber wine,
The spring painted city, the willows
along the palace walls,
Now I find the east wind unkind,
Joyful feelings thin;
A heart of melancholy,
Years of dislocation:
Wrong! Wrong! Wrong!

The spring is as of old;
One is growing pale for naught;
Tears stain through lace kerchiefs;
Peach blossoms are fallen;
The garden is unused;
Though vows, like mountains, still stand,
It is impossible to send word—
No! No! No!

(2)

By the broken bridge outside the courier
station
The plum tree blooms desolately, ownerless;
When the dusk comes it is grieving yet,
Irritated by the wind and the rain.

It wishes not to compete for the spring's
favor
And gives way to other flowers' jealousy,
Falling in the mud, ground to dust—
Only its fragrance remains as ever.

In the first *tzu*, the composer laments an earlier romance, frustrated when his beloved was forced to wed another man; in the second he projects his own unsuccessful career into the life of a neglected plum tree.

The *tzu* as a literary medium, then, adapted itself particularly well to private moods and emotions—the remorse of a displaced monarch, the longings of a neglected wife, the regrets of an unappreciated scholar. The *tzu* can be, and is usually, exquisite, often elegant, sometimes sensuous; but it seldom rises from the personal plane in which it is anchored by sheer emotional weight. It is at this point that the *shih*, or poem proper, overtakes it.

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From the odes to the *tzu*, Chinese poetry ran a course of more than two thousand years. The folksongs of pristine simplicity developed into song-patterned verses of sophisticated refinement. Between these two forms of poetic work we have the *fu*[3] (a kind of rhymed prose) that flourished in the Han, Wei and Tsin periods (roughly from 200 B.C. to 400 A.D.). Then, during the Northern and Southern dynasties (386-589), a fresh movement was started in poetry proper (*shih*), which reached its full development in the Tang and Sung dynasties. With the *tzu*, however, the virility of Chinese poetry had passed its high tide; and the ebb began to be apparent.

[3]Lu Chi's "Wen Fu", recently rendered into English by E. R. Hughes (Bollingen Series XXIX), is an example.

VERNON YOUNG

The History of Miss Julie[1]

> In the following drama I have not tried to do anything new—for that cannot be done—but I have tried to modernise the form in accordance with the demands which I thought the new men of a new time might be likely to make on this art.[2]

To THE VERY FEW *intellectually* complex achievements in the history of the cinema—*Les Enfants du Paradis, Beauty and the Beast, Rasho Mon*—must be added Alf Sjoberg's film treatment of August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. The sophistication with which it has been conceived, researched and executed is overwhelming. And its sophistication is equalled by its cinematic lucidity: it is incontestably visual—a sensuous masterpiece—while essentially cerebral. This unlikely balance of forces is especially remarkable in a film that has a play for its point of departure, normally an inception of which I vehemently disapprove. Sjoberg's success with the undertaking was earned by the *degree* to which he exercised the customary liberties of technical adaptation; since this degree was in turn the consequence of his unique sense of film art, the final result is an adaptation different in *kind* from any before accomplished.

[1]MISS JULIE (*Froken Julie*), 1951. Written and directed by Alf Sjoberg (since 1929 first director at the Royal Dramatic Theater, Stockholm, where his notable productions have included works by T. S. Eliot, Sartre and Lorca. Attained international recognition in 1944 with his film, *Hets*—U.S. title, *Torment*) . . . Cinematography by Goran Strindberg, quite distantly related to August. Some of his best work (he has been associated with 43 films, as of 1953) has not been seen outside Sweden. . . . Leading players: Anita Bjork as Julie; Ulf Palme as Jean; Anders Hendrickson as the Count. . . . A Trans-Global Films release (U.S. 1952).

[2]Quotations from the Author's Preface to *Miss Julie* (1888) are from the translation by Edwin Bjorkman in *Eight Famous Plays* by August Strindberg, translated by Bjorkman and Erichsen, with an introduction by Alan Harris. Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y. 1949, pp. 103-116.

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Few other cinematic editions of drama can be useful by way of comparison. *Brief Encounter,* directed by David Lean, was a thoughtful attempt, a skillful and deeply sympathetic *extension* of Coward's play. Sjoberg's film is not an extension, merely; it is a metamorphosis. The nearest thing I know to his art of transformation is Lean's production of *Oliver Twist,* where atmospheric and psychological possibilities were exploited far beyond what Dickens had set down in his verbally melodramatic book. Here, respectfully allowing Mr. Lean an awareness as potentially fine as Sjoberg's, there was less literary intelligence to draw from; Dickens' events never coalesce as idea. Olivier's *Hamlet* is the greatest tribute to Sjoberg we have by default, for one had supposed that this fabulous and protean drama, analyzed, notated, interpreted and reinterpreted as it has been for two and a half centuries, would by now offer an embarrassment of riches to the man bold enough to recreate it as a movie. But there isn't one hundredth of the taste, the daring, the mind, *or the concreteness* in the Shakespeare film that Sjoberg applied to a drama initially far poorer in poetic and philosophic equipment.

Strindberg's play is a long one-act composition, concentrating almost unbearably on the moral crisis of a young Countess who in an unguardedly suicidal moment (the moment is a midsummer festival of pagan origin, between twilight and dawn—figurative designations in Sweden) gives herself to her father's valet, as a consequence of which she destroys herself (shortly after the curtain falls, we assume). The entire action, as brief as it is unmitigated, takes place in the kitchen of the Count's (Julie's father's) country manor. Only three characters are represented: Countess Julie, Jean the valet and Kristin the cook, his paramour. Beyond this stark crisis we learn, by way of dialogue, that Miss Julie has recently forced her own jilting by a suitor outraged at her sadism; that she is the unwanted child of her strong-minded mother (now dead), a "commoner" who had first resisted the Count and then victimized him; that she was brought up, in attire and in duties, as a boy—by her mother's wish; that she had promised her mother she would never be the slave of a man.

> Miss Julie is a modern character, not because the man-hating half-woman may not have existed in all ages, but because now, after her discovery, she has stepped to the front and begun to make a noise. The half-woman is a type coming more and more into prominence, selling herself nowadays for power, decorations, distinctions, diplomas, as formerly for money, and the type indicates degeneration. . . . And degenerate men seem instinctively to make their selection from this kind of woman, so that they multiply and produce indeterminate sexes to whom life is a torture.

The father, who has gone to visit important relatives before the action of the play commences, never appears on the stage but, from the opening to the closing lines, he is felt as a dominating influence, not simply over Miss Julie

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but over Jean as well, who is unable to resolve his natural cupidity and his clever-mutt-opportunism into the gesture of emancipation he dreams about and gloats over and with which he taunts the fallen Countess. The unseen hand of the Count, ever ready to summon him with the service bell, frustrates his "plan"—to elope with Miss Julie and become a hotel keeper in Switzerland.[3]

> The mind of the slave speaks through his reverence for the count . . . and through his religious superstition. But he reveres the count principally as a possessor of that higher position towards which he himself is striving. And this reverence remains even when he has won the daughter of the house, and seen that the beautiful shell covered nothing but emptiness.

This, then, is the highly charged, theaterwise concentrate of an intensely nineteenth-century problem (dated only by its heavy portrayal of class inhibitions) that Sjoberg chose to re-express as a movie in 1951.

In converting theater to movie, it is common practise to supply expository and connective material in order to bridge the scenes and the acts; to multiply, if possible, the number of sets provided by the playwright; and to subvert the stretches of dialogue with an over-concentration on "business". Vain endeavors, usually. We have all experienced the awkwardness attendant upon these necessities. Even when we have not read or seen the theater version of the film under scrutiny, we can feel the bump as we cross the act division; we are too well aware of the ingenuity (or frenzy) as the action takes off from its arbitrary "scene" or as a scene is broken down into closeup components. If the director and scenarist have been relatively successful in their operations, we congratulate them, yet wonder at the imperative for working against such limitations.

> . . . . I have tried to abolish the division into acts. And I have done so because I have come to fear that our decreasing capacity for illusion might be unfavorably affected by intermissions during which the spectator would have time to reflect and to get away from the suggestive influence of the author-hypnotist. My play will probably last an hour and a half, and as it is possible to listen that length of time, or longer, to a lecture, a sermon, or a debate, I have imagined that a theatrical performance could not become fatiguing in the same time. . . . My hope is still for a public educated to the point where it can sit through a whole-evening performance in a single act.

The circumstance that Strindberg's play observes the Unities, while it eliminates some problems for a film director, creates others as formidable. In Sjoberg's *Miss Julie,* although the practices outlined above were resorted to as a matter

[3]Strindberg maintained, elsewhere in the preface, that Jean (the type, at any rate) would eventually emancipate himself—with all the ambivalent consequences to democracy we now know; but he was too honest to depict him in the play with characteristics more flattering to a sentimentally liberal viewpoint. Sjoberg has followed suit, retaining Jean's unattractiveness in all its details.

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of course, there is no evidence of unassimilated theatrics. Scope, rhythm and imagery testify to a freshly created composition, a new approach, felt through and re-imagined in a different key, as it were. One might very well speculate on Sjoberg having first reshaped *Miss Julie* in his mind as a novel, then distilling the movie from this amplified form, since the material he has added is far more than "delaying action"—it is substance and cause, and it is texture. But all of it is latent in Strindberg's original, either summarized by the characters or expounded by the author, himself, in his preface. There remained the question as to how these elaborations—of personality, pre-history, background and psychic atmosphere—could best be harmonized with the monochromatic movement of the play. Sjoberg's answer, structurally speaking, is what I shall term here the contrapuntal flashback, comparable to the technique of such a novel as Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* or Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness*. Instead of working back from one or two climaxes in lengthy flashback sequences (the conventional treatment), Sjoberg, like the novelist, employs a foreground story —the play itself, now flexibly rendered in terms of place; the primary subject, you could call it—intersected by sequences out of the past having their *own* climaxes which have prepared the total climax (the primary subject) we are witnessing almost simultaneously. In other words, as we make the linear journey along a narrative marked L to Z, the contributing factors A to L are intercut, but not in strict A to L order.[4]

The method is not original; its impressiveness in Sjoberg's usage arises, first of all, from the rhythmic force it gives to the montage. Availing himself of the classical film discovery (of Griffith and Eisenstein) that the cutting pace can be orchestrated so as itself to constitute a principal aesthetic element, Sjoberg builds his patterns by the ratio of pace-and-perspective between his foreground narrative and his flashbacks, and also between a closeup dialogue scene and a less static one taking place elsewhere at the same time. It is a perfect instrument of dramatic irony, too, as he demonstrates at the outset when Jean and Kristin snigger in double closeup over a glass of the Count's wine as Jean starts to tell her of Miss Julie's defeat at the hands of her suitor. Sjoberg cuts directly from closeup to the episode itself, cuts back immediately afterward to the closeup of the servants again, then back to Miss Julie *in the present,* turning away from the scene of her humiliation with a shudder as if she had just overheard Jean's leering recital.

My illustration leads into another effect comprised by this method, and a major theme in the film: the presentness of the past which, for Countess Julie, grows from a discomfort to an enormity. When she and Jean confess their obsessive dreams to each other, the exchange takes place on a misty knoll-top near an abandoned maypole, after a cut from the fleshy kermesse in the barn where servant couples dance and romp in celebration of St. John's Night. The

[4]*Intolerance* was the first film with narrative of this kind, but the resemblance is not identical; Griffith's interludes were *separate* stories, related "symbolically" to the main one.

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dream figures (Julie is falling, Jean is climbing) are materialized from the night air—i.e., within the same photographic frame as the characters, not dissolved into, or rendered as double-exposure ghosts; *they are there.* At the close of their confidences, drunken revellers intrude, sharply edged against the grey blankness where the dreams had taken shape, as if projected onto another screen. Even more startling an impingement is the source of Jean's reminiscence to Miss Julie as they sit in the orchard he had robbed when he was a child of poor retainers living in the neighborhood. The past is again summoned without fade or dissolve, and the incident of a flogging (which Jean fabricates to get sympathy) is concluded by a travelling shot over the expanse of the Count's estate as if we were following the boy's cries through the air; as they descend we are face to face with Jean recounting the story. Later, as we are moved into and out of Miss Julie's family history—where the combat of wills between the Count and his vindictive wife is as brutally presented as those in the foreground story—the proximities of time and of space are terrifying, since we then feel the parallel lines about to meet.

There is more to be said of Sjoberg's use of time-shift in powerful support of the primary theme—Heredity is Fate. Before continuing with such observations, I want to emphasize the *physicality* of Sjoberg's amendments to the play, lest the reader who has not seen the film wonders where all that destructive sensuality went to that Strindberg evoked as far as his century and his countrymen would permit. (Farther!—*Miss Julie* was not produced in Sweden until 1906, eighteen years after it had been written.) And it is the physicality, accumulated speech by speech in the theater, shot by shot in the film, that builds the psychological pressure for the single catastrophe of the play, the double one of the film—for, in the Sjoberg version, the burning of the house by the Count's wife as an act of revenge against him for having at last become master of his own family seems also a climax of the unfortunate daughter's smoldering passion, symbolized in the foreground story by the mists that rise like steam and the bonfires that punctuate the tailored lawns. In effect, Sjoberg availed himself of all that suggestible content which, if it were not patently Strindbergian, we should be obliged to call Freudian.

Consider, in this application, Sjoberg's handling of the rejection scene I indicated earlier. As written by Strindberg, Jean tells Kristin that the quarrel had transpired in the stable-yard when Miss Julie had made the County Attorney (in one translation he's a Lieutenant Governor!), her fiancé, jump "like a dog" over her horsewhip, giving him a cut each time. After the third jump he had snatched the whip from her, broken it—and with it their engagement. A few lines further, Kristin explains that she is cooking something special for Miss Julie's bitch, Diana, who is "sick" as a result of sneaking out with the gatekeeper's mongrel. Sjoberg combines the two references in one taut episode, opening with Diana and the mongrel in an unmistakable sniffing sortie, wit-

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nessed by Miss Julie, her fiancé and Jean, who are out riding together. The Countess, enraged, dismounts and begins to thrash Diana ferociously, whereupon the fiancé tries to wrest the whip from her hand; the scene, as otherwise described, then resumes.

Miss Julie's familiarity with the revelling servants, subject of Jean's opening line in the play, "Tonight Miss Julie is crazy again; absolutely crazy", is augmented in similar fashion by the resourceful Sjoberg. The dramatic version leaves us to imagine what marginal lewdities we will, beyond the Countess having danced with the gamekeeper and then with the valet. In the film, trailed by the mincing dog, Diana, she spies on two servants making love in the barn. As she mounts a box to get a better view of the panting encounter, the camera focuses on her lifted skirt above the tightly buttoned boots (also to be prominent in the last view we have of her, as her dead body is lifted from the floor). While Diana rubs and sniffs at the legs of her voyeuring mistress, Miss Julie finds a knot-hole to peer through and the camera frames one hungry eye as we hear a grunt of attainment about as vivid as anything movie naturalism has ever offered.

The sexual note is indeed rarely absent in the progress of the Sjoberg film: dogs, swift-pacing horses, stretched waists, the curve of a bust, glimpses of legs or bare shoulders of the peasant women, flowers, folk music and the air musky with mist and smoke. Strindberg's *mise en scene* calls for a Cupid in a fountain, to be seen through glass doors upstage. Sjoberg more than fulfils the hint, for the estate, within which the film takes place entirely (this is Sjoberg's concession to the Single Setting) is plausibly abundant with colossal statuary, emblems of a dead virility—the film opens with Jean riding, pompous but vital, between rows of chipped and weather-rotted gods—and in one scene the gardener spies on Miss Julie and the valet, who are conversing in an arbor, from behind a huge sculptured female with one breast bared. At the desperate moment before Julie agrees to go into Jean's room with him to escape the tipsy servants approaching the kitchen from outside, Jean assures her that he will shoot if they try his door. In the film, he displays the gun; Miss Julie seizes the barrel in a paroxysm of hysteria, hisses "Kill me! Kill me!"—and takes the barrel into her mouth.

> In explanation of Miss Julie's sad fate I have suggested many factors: her mother's fundamental instincts; her father's mistaken upbringing of the girl; her own nature . . . and more directly: the festive mood of the Midsummer Eve; the absence of her father; her physical condition; her preoccupation with the animals; the excitation of the dance; the dusk of the night; the strongly aphrodisiacal influence of the flowers; and lastly the chance forcing the two of them together in a secluded room, to which must be added the aggressiveness of the excited man.

Held by Sjoberg's unflagging attention to the diverse factors carefully enumer-

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ated by the playwright, we now watch the implacable advance of Miss Julie's destiny. Like the Greek spectator we know the outcome, not because we already know the plot, but because being stepsons of Freud we know the configuration; we can foretell the conditioned sequel. Or, like the psychiatrist whose patient has given way to an outburst of weeping, as a result not only of experiences she has just recited but also of those she related last week—or is yet concealing, or of which she is ignorant—we have a multiple view of the impending disaster. Our pleasure, if I may be so unkind, lies in watching Miss Julie being destroyed, inexorably—*beautifully:* a gratification not permissible, we trust, to the psychiatrist of my comparison! And Sjoberg gives a few more twists of the knife which improve on, or at least intensify, Strindberg's ending. In the final sequence, an ancestral picture falls on Jean, a triumphant echo of his childhood respect for the pictures he gaped at in the pavilion, during his trespass on the estate. . . . He answers the Count's bell. Miss Julie cuts her throat. The embittered portrait of the man-hating mother stares down at the self-violated Countess—her boots in medium closeup.

> The fact that the heroine arouses our pity depends only on our weakness in not being able to resist the sense of fear that the same fate could befall ourselves. And yet it is possible that a very sensitive spectator might fail to find satisfaction in this kind of pity, while the man believing in the future might demand some positive suggestion for the abolition of evil or, in other words, some kind of programme.

The play has for its immediate subject—*the destructive act?* All else is tributary; Miss Julie's concupiscence is the devouring event. The film's subject is larger; not just quantitatively more crowded—larger. Widening the province of action and motive, the screenplay makes it unmistakably clear that Miss Julie's will to bitchery is but the fateful climax of a nature at war with itself and its heritage; she is the breaking point of a century's strain. From The Fall of Miss Julie the subject has become The History of Miss Julie.

The reader who has only my report to go by may still be entertaining the suspicion that a film version, so increased in scale and sub-divided, would dissipate the narrative force of its model. It doesn't. . . . I have always felt that a movie's formal integrity is effectually proven when its coordinates sustain a unified impression, so that long afterward we recall the movie, quite apart from details of plot and performance, as a continuum which our memory seems to grasp as a single tonality—as a compound of images susceptible to being generalized instantly in terms of meaning and form, the more so, naturally, when the film subserves an intelligible idea. Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* is a negative example; audio-visually it makes an indelible impression, unit by unit, but upon short reflection we realize that it signified no more than it displayed: A Preparation, A Battle, A Celebration. Its fearsome moments add up to nothing but a methodically constructed rout. Whereas the same director's *Ten Days*

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That Shook the World will, upon mention, organize one's recall in some such phrase as symphonic progression—thesis and antithesis—an epic of mass effort. And Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* might be summarized as a vibration on a single string—a crescendo, monostrophic—an ode of individual anguish. . . . *Miss Julie* has a unity of character equally distinct, but lending itself less readily to quick definition of this kind. My subjective sensation—enforced by Goran Strindberg's photography with its screen-filling closeups and its depth of field drenched in light—is of interfusion and correspondence: an uneasy consort of elegance and animality in a landscape by Ruisdael—couples treading desperately in a contredance within a concentric grove inhabited by ghosts, armored against the spontaneity of nature by an infection of the will, from which they can be liberated only by an act of violence.

Sjoberg made a great movie: intricate, visually potent—*beautiful.* (This bears repetition; our cultural presupposition hates to admit the consonance of beauty with pessimism.) He also performed a metaphysical reprise; it is a coincidence almost uncanny that Strindberg expected his play to run an hour and a half (I would suppose less, if acted by an expert company) and that Sjoberg's film is exactly ninety minutes long, encompassing, with no loss of impact or comprehension, two dramas by Strindberg, the one he wrote and the interlinear one recapitulated by his characters and glossed by himself in his preface. Two orders of time: the duration of the single consequence which is the hour and a half of the acted play, and the other, the time that preceded yet only now is being experienced for what it all along signified—a plausible duality by recourse either to Bergson or to Freud! If, in the art of narrative, a play is a conquest of form by the use of space, the film is a conquest of form by the use of time. The distinctions are neither complete nor mutually exclusive but I think they're serviceable. Any movie is theoretically such a conquest, but the sensation is urgently present in the Sjoberg film owing to its compenetration of time-shift and figuratively abiding place.

Judging from this film and from his earlier *Torment*—like *Miss Julie* a lyrically surgical exposure of derailed love—I think Sjoberg must be the most creative intelligence (in the Western world) now occupied with the art of cinematography. If he has brought to his film version (1952) of Par Lagerkvist's novel, *Barabbas*—a fiction less substantial than suggestive—anything like the astounding virtuosity and depth of *Miss Julie*, it should be the motion picture import most worth waiting for from Europe.

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Reviews

R. W. FLINT

Pound and Modern Poetry

SOME SENTENCES WRITTEN IN 1922 BY JACQUES RIVIÈRE apropos of Valéry oddly but effectively, I think, explain the rightness and charm of Pound's new Chinese translations.[1] "Everyone today," Rivière writes, "agrees that a truth, that is to say an idea in contact with things and reproducing them, is inexpressible in poetry without infecting it with a touch of the prosaic. Poetry tends more and more to differentiate itself from judgement, and even from perception (because of whatever judgement is therein involved); it opens itself more and more surely over that chasm which we carry in ourselves, different at once from the heart, the senses and the intelligence, and devotes itself with a growing docility to the collection there of vague murmurs. Thus there follows an increasing severe exclusion of intellectual lyricism."

How, one may well ask, does this patently Mallarmean remark apply to the brisk, energetic daylight world of early Chinese poetry? Whether or not Confucius actually collected the anthology (and most scholars now, according to Achilles Fang's informative introduction, believe he was merely their musical editor), did he not value them precisely because they fortified his own notions of healthy intellectual judgement, or, by contrast, dramatized the plight of political exiles, poor farmers and other such victims of malfeasance in high places? The answer, of course, is yes. These poems certainly do comprise a corporate act of intellectual lyricism, celebrating the ideals of order and luminousness, immanent reason and the unwobbling moral pivot, that Pound himself, in his peculiarly sidelong, convulsive and intuitive manner, has long been trying to isolate and celebrate. The echoes we hear in these translations are not merely echoes from earlier English verse but from earlier verse by Pound. In homelier, less discursive language, this is the "Dantescan light", the hovering about a mystery at once aesthetic and political, visionary and moral, which Pound has been trying to "detach" from all the florid distractions of history. (Pound's own spells of floridity and distraction have helped supply a convincing poetic world within which the search could take place.)

Rivière's remarks, however, seem to me to go well beyond this obvious difference between Valéry and the Pound translations to define the nature of twentieth century poetry in a way that includes every poet, no matter how exotic or how homely and obvious he may appear to be. He is merely giving

[1]THE CLASSIC ANTHOLOGY DEFINED BY CONFUCIUS, by *Ezra Pound*. Harvard University Press. $5.00.

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a somewhat more respectable cast to Poe's earlier dictum that poetry has nothing to do with "truth". Neither Poe nor Rivière bothers to define very exactly what he means by truth, but if you take the word as it applies to Valéry I think the meaning is clear enough. What they both say, with all possible disrespect for the bigots of a truth hostile to poetry, is that poetic truth is inseparable from poetic form, and that absolute poetic truth is reached only by poets who perfect a comprehensive form or set of forms in which the whole culture gladly finds itself mirrored. Dante, Shakespeare and Racine once and for all express the hitherto inchoate or less well expressed thought lying at the roots of a culture, and in so doing deal with the world in a straightforward or, so to speak, bilateral analogy. (Compared to geometric truth, of course, even their truth is synthetic and palimpsestic, as modern criticism has so thoroughly demonstrated. What agitates here is a question of relative truth within poetry itself.) Racine, little given as he was to moralizing, adds an ultimate dramatic power to the cult of secular love—the *idea* of love in its secular form. To do this he obviously borrows as much from the seventeenth century cult of Reason as from the universal cult of love. Reason is his convention, love his subject. What Rivière seems to be saying about Valéry is that Valéry, writing at a time when no common cult of poetry and reason is possible but a time which still keeps a taste for poetry and at least the sentiment of order, has to repress his natural instinct to dramatize any single commonly accepted cluster of ideas (there not being any such cluster) and confine himself to making poetry out of the very experience of having ideas, which will be universal as long as man is in *any* sense a reasoning animal. His truth will be doubly synthetic, therefore, by any of the classic canons of poetic truth, arrived at not only by analogy with the outside world but first of all with its own processes. Valéry must literally go out of the way to find the palm trees and cemeteries that will release the most universal of his feelings (just as Frost, it might be added, had to go to his half-bucolic, half-melodramatic New Hampshire to release his). To achieve depth he had to achieve an equal obliquity.

To return to Pound: if early, pre-philosophical poetry (poetry written before the thought of a culture is codified by philosophers) can be called pre-rational, modern poetry cannot be patly defined as post-rational. More than the mere *sentiment* of order, powerful as that is, is left to a poet of Pound's calibre. Like Valéry, he inherits the elements of order built in (as the social scientists say) to the language and forms he uses—the affinity of words for words, forms for forms, ideas for ideas, the whole apparatus of harmonious contrast developed by earlier poets. For the early Chinese poet this ordering process was hit-or-miss. Each successful new poem was a discovery of form, a step in the gradual ordering of the world later to be codified by the philosophers. The choice of what might be *the* appropriate form for translating these highly varied Chinese lyrics, the poetics of which, Mr. Fang tells us, are still largely obscure to Chinese scholars, was never a clear option for Pound. In other words, the kind

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of truth we recognize in the perfected Shakespearean drama or the perfected alexandrine was never a possible goal. (If I seem to be laboring the obvious, I'm also trying to deal with the nostalgia for pre-Poundian translation, be it even the humble jingles of Longfellow or Elizur Wright's LaFontaine, which comes over the best of our critics.) Whatever truth might be displayed, and Pound's intentions here are certainly as didactic as elsewhere, had to be displayed by a kind of multiple analogy.

Pound was obliged to give us the way these Confucian verities look when filtered through a screen of freshly assembled parts of the whole lyric tradition. The phrase, the cadence, the delicacy, energy and excitement are Pound's, but the Confucian ideas of the original poems supply the magnet that composes the whole. So you have the slight suggestive vagueness in word and syntax that critics have noted in Pound as his link with the pre-raphaelites. Neither the syntax nor the metaphorical logic are ever as clear or fixed as they are in a song by Shakespeare or a lyric by Herbert, but Pound is by the same token free to evoke the pathos of the originals by a subtle, if perhaps not wholly conscious, play on his own distance from the English models whose metre and diction he borrows. Pathos is a Chinese specialty. Pound brings it over into English as nobody else in our generation could. This is no longer Chinoiserie; it is China. His translations rise from the ashes of the English lyric, not as quotable, perhaps, as their ripest models, but amply displaying what Robert Penn Warren has called his "old imperial ease of language" and Dudley Fitts his "incredible ear for cadence".

These poems may well have only a *succès d'estime* with the mass of readers who expect great poetry to be inevitable, an absolute meeting of *Zeitgeist* and language, be it Shakespeare or Rudyard Kipling. They do indeed lack that kind of inevitability. How could they have had it? Fitzgerald's Omar spoke more directly to his time than Pound's Chinese to ours. What they do decidedly share with the *Rubaiyat* is that second greatest virtue of translations, transparency. Their very oddities and irregularities are a way of leading us to the subject, of letting us see the size as well as the sweetness of the pre-Confucian universe. I doubt if any other collection of poems this long in English contains as many nouns.

The beauty of about a dozen of these poems shows how much Pound was moved by the kinds of truth they express. The book is divided into four sections: *Folk Songs—Elegantiae, or "Smaller Odes"—Greater Odes—Odes of Temple and Altar*. They were all meant to be sung. Confucius, in all probability, sang them himself to the lute. It would be in the best American tradition to say that the best poems are the folk songs in Poundian hill-billy about the "yaller bird" which is besought to stay away from the "crawps", and the worst the formal odes in Poundian Chaucerian. Fortunately or unfortunately, this is not so. Pound is *somewhat* colloquial in nearly all and wholly colloquial in very few. But all this matters very, very little. There are beautiful poems:

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Locusts a-wing, multiply
Thick be thy
posterity.

Locusts a-wing with heavy sound;
strong as great rope may thy line
abound.

Wing'd locust, that seem to cease,
in great companies hibernate,
So may thy line last and be great
in hidden ease.

This is a folk song. Here is part of one of the *Elegantiae:*

Heaven susteyne thy course in quietness
that thou be just in all, and reap
so, as it were at ease, that every day
seem festival.

Heaven susteyne thy course in quietness
To abound and rise as mountain hill and range
constant as rivers flow that all augment
steady th'increase in ever cyclic change.

Pure be the victuals of thy sacrifice
throughout the year as autumns move to springs,
above the fane to hear "ten thousand years"
spoke by the manes of foregone dukes and kings.

Spirits of air assign felicity:
thy folk be honest, in food and drink delight;
dark-haired the hundred tribes concord
in act born of thy true insight.

As moon constant in phase; as sun to rise;
as the south-hills nor crumble nor decline;
as pine and cypress evergreen the year
be thy continuing line.

The second is essentially a graver, more formal version of the first, a Ming vase set against a rice-dish. The dynastic political sense, the emphasis on family, tribe and benevolent despotism might seem on the face of it a barrier between these poems and their American translator. But anyone can see that this is not so. Each degree of distance from the plain prose "truth" of these poems as they were written aided Pound in distilling out their poetic as well as their moral essence, aided him also in wearing them as a mask rather than a

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mouthpiece. Their transparency is of a kind to let the subject through in a great variety of ways, to give us the English elegance and weight without writing "in the style of" anyone but Pound.

One approach to the poetry of "Grampa-in-the-bughouse" (ipse dixit) is the ardent brevity of his Old Defenders, Eliot, Tate and Fitts. The need for this restraint is everywhere suggested by Pound himself. The entertaining (and sometimes not so entertaining) sideshow of his prose has usually been balanced on a still, small, (more or less) unwobbling pivot of simple ideas, the Ben Jonsonisms of the twentieth century. They have provided our bread-and-butter catechism of lyric poetry at its fullest stretch, distinguished from the usual Hillyerisms by a greater vitality and sense of the past. What does it matter if he has delivered himself of some of his oracles like a mad prophet at a drunken Assyrian feast? And what does it really matter that he has so often been unable to see the difference between an ideal poets' republic and any immediate possibility? His sins are serious, but these are not among them. Pound's clowning has been the antidote, not to the considerable truth, of course, in the middling criticism of the homekeepers, but to the bland assumption that poetry is nothing to get excited about, to the placatory prophets of a once masterful Augustan humanism.

The sentiment of mastery and the sentiment of radical order; these have been Pound's prose legacies to my own generation. In no other poet of this age do they appear with more élan or passionate refinement; no critic has been more successful in detaching them from their local accidents. As this has gradually come clear during the last ten years or so, we have had a school of Young Defenders whose prophet is Hugh Kenner, a cult not so much of Pound as of these Poundian ideals reflected in his work. I hope it is no disparagement of Mr. Kenner's very able writing to say that he has illustrated the dangers as well as the virtues of a new Augustanism. The new Poundians often sound like the old Johnsonians, with an artistic ethic substituted for the old-fashioned Christian imperial moralism of the eighteenth century.

They have made the criticism of Pound into a prose reflection of Pound's poetry, a fitful mirror of its own aspirations, an organism in which the essential life-blood comes and goes. Often animated more by sentiments than by strictly rational procedures, it has risen to exhilarating heights of close argument separated from each other by strange ellipses, as if the peaks were surrounded by low-lying clouds hiding valleys altogether too low-lying to need examination. In trying (often successfully) to filter through a prose medium the quality of Pound's passionately innocent addiction to reason-in-art, it has shared the pathos of Pound's often touching and occasionally profound letters to Santayana (that somewhat weary prophet of radical coherence). Kenner is the sort of disciple that Santayana would have had, did in fact have, twenty years

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earlier. But Santayana, after all, was only a dim star among the great luminaries of twentieth century poetry. Inevitably the gifted young exegetes and/or casuists of a later day have attached themselves to poets who sacrificed something of the reality of coherence for the sentiment of it deployed in verse. Something may have been lost, but much is also gained. In any event, the change is very marked and not to be wished away. Mr. Kenner invites us to most of the normal tasks of Reason, to discipline, scholarship and a universal point of view. In ten years' time, his work has lost much of its dogmatic scornfulness and now reflects Pound's gentler virtues, the small voice of self-knowledge behind the crazier tirades.

His essay, "The Broken Mirrors and the Mirror of Memory", is the best of the four essays recently collected,[2] a persuasive treatment of the ideal of immanent reason. He shows how Pound makes a vital self-subsistent unit of language and thought, language and vision, a reality which finds its supporting action, its dramatic justification, in the business of writing poetry and being a poet in our centreless modern world. (Our reply to the critics who like to gloat over this centrelessness is: show us a centre that has written better poetry than this "chaos".) I should be happy enough here to be only an accurate exegete of Kenner's exegesis, for much is at stake. His treatment of Symbolism, as codified for American readers in *Axel's Castle*, seems to me a turning point in modern criticism, and this essay will furnish the gist of the matter to readers who may not want to read his book. Symbolism and Imagism were never very clear about what their symbols and images symbolized. Were they, or were they not, directly symbolic of some large received body of truth? Or were they, as Amy Lowell and W. C. Williams seemed to imply, merely experimental and heuristic? On the assumption that they were the former, R. P. Blackmur wrote an elaborate and (it seems to me) largely mistaken dissection of Yeats's "philosophy" as something too jerry-built to support a truly major poetry. He was not far wrong about the philosophy as such, perhaps, but he surely must have been wrong about Yeats's intentions in fabricating it. Yeats's reply to Blackmur would perhaps have been that even in its commerce with the great systems of thought poetry must be experimental. *Everything* bigger, harder, colder, less animated and less colorful than itself is monstrous to poetry. At the very least, Yeats conjured up an amusing monster for his poetry to swallow. Eliot, groping about with the rest of his compeers, early settled on comparative religion, from which he moved steadily toward whatever orthodoxy there may be in Christian thought. So you have the phenomenon of a group of poets earnestly using symbols in what they felt to be a new spirit, but with no agreement about what their

[2]MOTIVE AND METHOD IN THE CANTOS OF EZRA POUND (English Institute Essays, 1953), by *Hugh Kenner, Guy Davenport, Sister M. Bernetta Quinn,* and *Forrest Read Jr.* Columbia University Press, $2.75.

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symbols represented or ought to represent. Yeats's theory of the mask (or was it Pound's?) was the closest anyone came in Yeats's lifetime to naming the kind of analogical obliquity that all of the poets were practicing. (Yes, even Frost!)

Perhaps Kenner goes to another extreme in claiming that "Pound is determined to dispel at the start the notion that the things in his poems are symbols: that he says what he seems to be saying only as a way of saying something else". If this is a somewhat emasculating half-truth (from Pound's professed point of view), the rest of his essay fairly rights the balance. The episodes thrown up to view in *The Cantos*, though vastly less dramatic than the great Dantean episodes, are no less a contribution to reality and not *merely* an oblique comment on a greater reality outside. Has the poet, in thus deciding to reflect on his own operations, set himself up as a sort of rarefied, hypostatized platonic essence? Perhaps. In any case, it was a step that had to be taken if he hoped to keep his breadth and integrity. With great serenity, these episodes of Pound's emerge from "a long sequence of efforts on his part to draw our attention to the status of the poetic process itself as the central drama of his poetry". These states of mind, visionary experiences, qualities of being, which the poet celebrates, Mr. Kenner asserts with platonic *sang froid*, are really *there*, are "divine" realities and not merely illustrations for a humanist ethic; ". . . not man/ Made courage, or made order, or made grace", but man becoming fitfully a *part* of all these things. Their secular vitality as moral homilies depends on their vitality as things-in-themselves. If this sounds like a cultist mystique, I submit it is the sort that has always invigorated poetry rather than harmed it.

I am sure this is Kenner's best essay on Pound as I am sure that this approach to the mysteries of Symbolism gives new energy to the main current of our modern reading of poetry. "He respected the idiosyncrasies of his subject matter and it fused itself finally, because by long and ardent attention he was able to discover what Bertrans de Born discovered about the lady Maent: not the living principle it would have been fatally easy for the observer's mind to import, but the modes of coherence, always awaited but for most of the history of the acquaintance unguessed at, which in fact inhered." My quarrel with Mr. Kenner aims itself only at the notion that it can be "fatally easy" to "import" any living principle whatsoever.

The other essays provide interesting and useful explorations of the ideas of Frobenius, of metamorphosis, and of the Ulysses-analogy as they intermittently order and inform *The Cantos*. If they read like early Kenner for the most part, they are scrupulous with their evidence and convincing as far as they go. The thing to be most grateful for in this line of thought is that it takes seriously the elements in Pound which alone can give him the criticism he deserves: the sobriety and the serenity shaping, sweetening, illuminating, never more so than now, the all too human mass.

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DONAT O'DONNELL

The Scienteer

THE EMPEROR'S CLOTHES. An Attack on the Dogmatic Orthodoxy of T. S. Eliot, Graham Greene, Dorothy Sayers, C. S. Lewis and others, by *Kathleen Nott*. Indiana University Press. $4.00.

> . . . . the prime concern of this book is not with metaphysics, but with that area of discussion where neo-scholastic claims conflict with observable experience (*The Emperor's Clothes*, p. 69).
>
> Although it has been repeatedly necessary to attack the intellectual foundations of theology, it has not been my prime object to do so, but rather to make some conjecture of the kind of mental climate in which writers would have to live and write if the orthodox, by moral, social or legal pressure, could impose their orthodoxy upon our ways of thinking (*Ibid*, p. 105).
>
> This book is an attempt to isolate and criticise a philosophical tendency which is common to a number of contemporary writers. Most of them are poets or critics of poetry. They are concerned with what is generally called creative writing and are laymen in theology as well as science. As a rule they do not attack science directly, only the humanism to which science lends, by implication, support (*Ibid*, p. 253).
>
> . . . . this is a book about a certain misalliance which has taken place between philosophy and the literary mind (*Ibid*, p. 285).
>
> This book might be regarded by some people as a defence of liberal and humanistic philosophy and faith, against the attempt to involve us in a return to dogmatic orthodoxy. But that has not been its special purpose (*Ibid*, p. 312. *Reviewer's Note:* 'Special purpose' not subsequently re-defined).

HERE, THEN, WE HAVE AN ATTACK ON THE DOGMATIC THEOLOGY of certain writers, but an attack which is not primarily concerned with theology at all. It is primarily concerned with sociological speculation about the future—what life would be like for writers under an imposed 'orthodoxy'—but it is mainly about a philosophical (although presumably not a metaphysical or a theological) tendency which exists in contemporary writers. Furthermore, although it deals primarily with an area in which the claims of these writers (described as 'neo-scholastics') conflict with science ('observable experience') yet the claims which these writers make do not (it appears) actually conflict with science but only with something which Miss Nott calls 'humanism' and which she thinks is rather like science.

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Let us turn from what Miss Nott says she is doing, which is not very clear, to what she actually does, and how she does it. The first, and better, half of her book is concerned mainly with Mr. Eliot. This contains some shrewd hits—for example the discovery in Mr. Eliot's prose style of 'an obsession to avoid all the cracks in the pavement'—and it also contains some unconscious comedy. Mr. Eliot is known to be both dogmatic and orthodox, two things which Miss Nott cannot abide, but it is very hard to discover in his work any positive avowals of aggressive superstition and anti-scientific bias. 'Down, down presumptuous human reason!', the pseudo-Bishop in *The Man who was Thursday* used to proclaim whenever he entered a drawing room. Miss Nott *knows* that Mr. Eliot in the privacy of his own circle must hold some such language. If only he could be got to repeat it outside . . . 'Come out and fight, Tommy Eliot!' shouts the rough little girl swinging on the gate. But the curtains are drawn, no answer comes, and there is nothing for it but to take it out on poor little C. S. Lewis as he comes home from the B.B.C., to pull the pigtail of Miss Dorothy Sayers, and generally be rude to the smaller members of the Sunday School.

It is characteristic of Miss Nott that she regards Mr. Eliot's failure to expound Church doctrines as part of an 'insidious method' of controversy. It never occurs to her—although she repeatedly expresses irritation at his reticence—that a lay member of a teaching and hierarchical Church might prefer to leave the expounding and defence of dogma to those whom he necessarily regards as better qualified than himself. This explanation would not, in Miss Nott's eyes, be a creditable one, but it is one that she should at least have considered; on her own asserted principles—which are the honourable scientific ones of accurate observation and recording—the fact that she dislikes the phenomena 'dogma' and 'hierarchy' does not dispense her from observing how these phenomena actually work in a particular case. If she were doing so—that is, if she were thinking and acting scientifically—she would have tried out a number of hypotheses which might explain the phenomenon of Mr. Eliot's silence, and among these the hypothesis that he leaves the teaching of religion to the Church would certainly have a place. In fact, she contents herself with the single, unverifiable, and discreditable hypothesis of an 'insidious method', used to conceal the intellectual bankruptcy of the theological position. It appears, then, that although Miss Nott exalts the scientific method, she does not (in this instance) apply it. It becomes pertinent to ask whether this instance is isolated. Since her concern is roughly—she does not define it consistently—with 'the clash between theology and scientific method'—and since she stresses that the scientific hypothetico-observational method is in fact the only way we can think usefully, we have a right to expect that her own thinking will be hypothetico-observational, and that the advertised 'clash between theology and scientific method' will actually take place in her pages. In so far as she

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thinks and writes loosely, what 'clashes' with theology (in her book) will not be the scientific method, but something different and non-scientific, which, in order to be inoffensive, we may call 'x'. And in so far as she has not troubled to inform herself about theology, it will not be 'theology' which is clashing with 'x', but something different which we may call 'y' (remembering John Stuart Mill's saying that algebra is as full of mysteries as theology). On the hypotheses that, in fact, she does not apply the scientific method, and is ignorant about theology, the whole debate would be quite other than what Miss Nott represents, and no doubt believes, it to be.

In order to test these hypotheses (and especially the more important hypothesis that her thinking is not scientific) I propose to examine in a little detail a number of her statements which seem to me dubious in various ways.

> Progress for the whole human race would be, if not inevitable, at least highly probable, if a sufficient majority of people were trained to use their reasoning power on their general experience, as a scientist is trained to use his reasoning power on his special experience. (p. 5)

Miss Nott does not tell us what kind of progress, or in what direction, or why it would be likely to result from the kind of training she mentions, or whether any tests have been made or can be devised to verify her statement. The statement is therefore as 'dogmatic' as any of the ecclesiastical beliefs which she dislikes, with the difference that it is backed, not by the authority of a Church, but by the prestige of scientific achievement. This prestige is illegitimately invoked in support of a statement not based on scientific method. Although this statement is no more than an imprecise and unverified hypothesis it is of importance in her arguments. She reproaches her 'neo-scholastics' for their belief (inferred by her) 'that we cannot become better by knowing more about ourselves and about the nature which we share with others'. She implies that we can do so. But she does not attempt to show why this should be probable, nor does she discuss the interesting question of whether we have already become better, since we do know more 'about ourselves' than our grandfathers knew about themselves. An answer to which might be that we probably behave worse, by our grandfathers' standards, but that we no longer accept those standards. 'Moral progress' is a rather more ambiguous concept than Miss Nott appears to understand.

> This may suggest that morality in behavior is after all intimately connected with one's intellectual outlook, and may actually depend on whether that outlook is true or false. (p. 23)

What is 'this'? 'This' is 'the sad fact that the anti-Pelagians . . . do not always behave better but often worse'. We do not know who these 'anti-Pelagians' are; whether, for example, they are the general body of Church-going Christians, or just the little group of 'neo-scholastic' writers whom Miss Nott

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is discussing. Nor is the group with which they are contrasted identified at all. We do not know whether they are practising Pelagians, or the non-Christian world in general (including the Gonds of Central India who worship tigers), or non-Christian English writers as a class, or just some Whiggish but well-behaved friends of Miss Nott's. Nor do we know in what respects or by what standards the behaviour of the first undefined group falls short of the behaviour of the second undefined group. Above all we do not know how Miss Nott got her information or what her information is. Finally, we are not even told that the first group does, on the whole, behave worse than the second; just that it does not 'always' behave better but 'often' behaves worse. Yet this curious body of evidence 'suggests' to Miss Nott the existence of a positive correlation between morality of behaviour and a 'true' (i.e. Nottish) outlook on life. The demonstration is lacking in rigour and the conclusion is a little smug.

> The totally non-scientific concept of Original Sin . . . is also in fact the only belief which allows us to destroy babies and the unborn, in peace of conscience. (p. 25)

This statement seems something of a paradox. The doctrine of Original Sin, certainly as interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church, does not diminish, but on the contrary greatly increases, the sin of deliberately killing the unbaptized. Furthermore, that Church has set its face against the killing of the unborn in cases where the 'humanist' beliefs of many would authorize such killing (legalized abortion, craniotomy). On what evidence, then, does Miss Nott base so surprising an assertion? Her main piece of evidence is the following declaration of a Commission appointed by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America:—

> If, as we have felt bound to acknowledge, certain key industrial targets are inescapably involved in modern war, we find no moral distinction between destroying them by tons of TNT or by fire, as compared with an atomic bomb, save as greater precision is possible in one as compared with others . . . We believe that American military strength, which must include atomic weapons, as long as any other nation may possess them, is an essential factor in the possibility of preventing both world war and tyranny.

The first statement in this declaration is a moral comparison, the truth of which is self-evident; the second is a patriotic political opinion, entirely non-theological in character. There is no question, in either statement, of Original Sin, either as a factor in justifying infanticide or otherwise. To this 'evidence', Miss Nott adds the negative item that 'none of the Established Churches has ever declared uncompromisingly that mass destruction is morally wrong'. We may note that a failure to 'declare uncompromisingly' against mass destruction is not quite the same as propounding a 'belief which allows us to destroy babies and the

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unborn, in peace of conscience'. The third item in Miss Nott's dossier is the assertion that 'historically, war has been nearer to "total", the more it has been religious and the less it has been scientific'; a statement which, if accepted, would involve us in the absurdity that, say, the French Wars of Religion were either more total or less religious than World War II. The only exhibit in support of this belief is what Miss Nott calls 'the Crusades against the Albigenses', and cites as an example of a religious motive encouraging 'the belief in the moral rightness of sacking, pillaging and total slaughter'. There is, however, no good evidence that the Church gave its approval, even in the Albigensian Crusade, to 'total slaughter' (including babies and the unborn) and if it had done so, the last dogma which it would have been likely to invoke in support would have been that of Original Sin. In short, her conclusion is not warranted by any of her items of evidence, or by all of them together, since they are disparate and only linked by Miss Nott's dislike of religious manifestations in general.

> If we deplore a total way of looking at the world which has grown up historically as a reaction to that given and unavoidable world, there is only one meaning which can be attached to this emotion—that we wish we could extirpate a section of human experience, or of reality. In our public thought, as in our private emotions, this is a dangerous delusion. (p. 182)

This is more than usually obscure. Miss Nott's description of 'a total way of looking at the world' etc. would cover literally any human system of belief, including Catholicism and National Socialism. Miss Nott certainly deplores both these systems but probably would not admit that this involves her in a wish to 'extirpate a section of human experience' and therefore in 'a dangerous illusion'. In any case the mere wish that 'we could extirpate a section of human experience' is not in itself an 'illusion', dangerous or other. From the general context—which is also rather confused—it appears that Miss Nott's 'total way of looking at the world' is intended to refer to scientific method, linked by her with liberal humanism. It is not, I think, unfair to her thought to reduce it to the form: 'If you don't like liberal humanism you don't like science, and if you don't like science you're off your head, or soon will be.' If this is correct —and I doubt whether Miss Nott would quarrel with it as a rough-and-ready summary of her teaching on the point—it has interesting implications about (to quote her own words) 'the kind of mental climate in which writers would have to live and write' if the liberal humanists were in sole charge of our society. 'So he's criticized Bertrand Russell, has he? On anti-scientific principles, you think? Poor fellow! Ah well, with electricity and insulin we'll probably have him right before very long.' Far-fetched, no doubt, but hardly more so than some of Miss Nott's dark hints about Mr. Eliot and the Inquisition.

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> . . . This [a statement of Mr. Eliot's] ignores the fact that good contemporary scholars do actually know more about the times and conditions in which the dead poets worked than the poets did themselves. (p. 221)

If this is a 'fact' which it is wrong to 'ignore' Miss Nott should do something to establish it, since it is not self-evident. One wonders what good contemporary scholar would claim to know more about 'the times and conditions' in which Homer worked than Homer himself did. A contemporary scholar could perhaps (though not certainly) know more than Chaucer did about the Fourteenth-century wool-trade and the increase in customs revenue, but he is likely to know a good deal less than Chaucer did about how Chaucer's contemporaries behaved—a rather more important aspect of the 'times and conditions' in which Chaucer lived. This exaltation of 'historical science'—Miss Nott believes that we are in possession of 'a correct history'—is favoured by few practising historians, except by Marxists; a category to which Miss Nott does not belong. In the historical field, as in others, she writes not scientifically but as a propagandist of science.

> But very few serious scientists seem to be unhappy men, whereas the floundering and fantastic among the literary who prefer, with the Churches, to maintain the essential 'mystery' of human nature too often exemplify that ignorance is misery. (p. 297)

Like the similar statement about the relative virtue of scientists and Christians, this statement involves us in reliance on Miss Nott's authority, supported by her unspecified observations of vaguely defined groups. A scientist whose authority is not less than Miss Nott's—Dr. Robert Oppenheimer—has recently affirmed the common loneliness of scientists and artists, and does not seem to lend support to Miss Nott's theory of *Freude durch Wissenschaft.*

> . . . for survival, the adult criterion, the scientist must protect the poet from the priests and the poet must protect the scientist from the politicians. (p. 248)

This is certainly the most touching image in the book and it would be a shame to spoil it with any harsh breath of reality. It would be pleasing to have it illustrated in a diptych, with each panel executed in the style of the Douanier Rousseau's *La Muse inspirant le Poète.*

> The more clearly defined and agreed the body of theological rules, the greater the emphasis on the sinfulness of disobedience; as in the Roman Catholic Church and as we might expect. (p. 306)

This statement, if it were a scientific one, would imply that Miss Nott had carried out a thorough survey of a wide variety of theological systems. That she has not done so is proved by her conclusion, which is false. Luther teaches

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that disobedience is a worse sin than murder—a much more extreme position than the Roman Catholic one.

From these examples—and many more could be added—I suggest that it is fair to conclude that Miss Nott shows little concern, in her own writing, for scientific method and that she knows little about theology. If so, her book may be regarded, not as a serious discussion of science and theology, in relation to a group of writers, but as an exercise in what one might call scienteering: the use of the prestige of the scientific method for purposes of controversial aggression. As a scienteer, Miss Nott is in the front rank, sanguine, arrogant and quite uninhibited by considerations of precision.

HUGH KENNER

Dr. Williams Shaping His Axe

SELECTED ESSAYS, by *William Carlos Williams*. Random House. $4.50.

DR. WILLIAMS, INFINITELY SYMPATHETIC WITH THE PURPOSEFULNESS of earnest coteries, is our champion contributor to the least-known magazines, into which he empties his mind of its current obsessions. Since he hasn't been all these years painfully developing a system (which means trimming one's later ideas to fit the earlier ones: "order that cuts off the crab's feelers to make it fit into the box"); hasn't feared to risk in his fifties and sixties the kind of false starts that don't matter in one's twenties; and has kept his mind at the moment of writing fixed on some object or other that looms as oppressively as the cat's head in the primitive painting ("a cat with a bird in his mouth—a cat with a terrifying enormous head, enough to frighten birds")—for all these reasons random samples of his fugitive writings, gleaned from such copies of equally fugitive magazines as come one's way, are apt to prove unfortunate. Hence the impression (on what has been to date necessarily imperfect acquaintance) of a bush-league avantgardist, one foot still in the 1920's, apt to be sent gaga by the latest surrealist. His tone isn't soothing; he is himself the archetypal six-foot cat's head; even when he makes an appearance among the statuary of more securely capitalized publications, virtually put on his honor not to frighten the birds, commissioned for instance to review Shapiro's *Essay on Rime*, he is apt to throw his overcoat onto the grand piano ("I hadn't prepared a damn thing"[1]) and begin—

> Suppose all women were delightful, the ugly, the short, the fat, the intellectual, the stupid, the old—and making a virtue of their qualities

[1]Cf. his 1950 lecture at UCLA: *Autobiography*, p. 386.

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> . . . made themselves available to men, some man, any man, without greed! . . . Take for instance the fat: If she were not too self-conscious, did not regret that she were not lissome and quick afoot, but gave herself, full belly, to the sport! What a game it would make! . . .

The man who jammed a notion like that into the *Kenyon Review* can be credited with having extended our notions of the possible, but hardly with an Eliotic platform manner. It is no wonder that he isn't known as a major critic, especially since he doesn't specialize in putting into hierarchies an array of poems closed off forty years ago (Wyndham Lewis's "Dead arrangements by the tasteful hand without") but concentrates on the *nature* of writing, especially the writing that somebody ought to be doing right now. No critic senses more urgently the immediate relevance of his subject to this year's necessary activities.

Poetry, for him, keeps thought clean; not by what is vaguely called "the humanizing influence of literary studies" but by virtue of *what it says,* on the rare occasions when the writing is sufficiently good. Just any poetry won't do; the sea contains incalculably more water than it does whale, but that is no reason for confusing the two. Dr. Williams writes to defend critic and practitioner alike against "belief in a complicated mystery of approach fostered by those who wish nothing done".

> The trick is delay; to involve the mind in discussions likely to last a lifetime and so withdraw the active agent from performance. The answer is, an eye to judge.—When the deer is running between the birches one doesn't get out a sextant but a gun—a flash of insight with proof by performance—and let discussion follow. If the result is a work of art the effect is permanent.

Amid boulders his shots often ricochet; this wouldn't happen if he were pelting his quarry with grapes, but it has condemned a good deal of his prose to mere eccentricity. In retrospect, fortunately, Williams can be trusted to identify his solid critical achievements, though unlike Pound and Eliot he hasn't up to now troubled to keep them pruned and in circulation. The present collection of essays that should have been widely known years ago (the gist of the book lurks in pieces written before 1939, and the contents date from 1920) ought to scatter a good many pigeons. Its advent is nicely timed to disturb the afternoon peace of a bureaucracy that has lately been supposing all the major criticism of the present time to be well known and sifted, the orthodoxies established, the hammocks slung, the returns in, and nothing to do but execute philosophical doodles—pointless as freshman themes—while the grad students work at tabulations. Williams has the timely virtue of being sufficiently aphoristic to focus attention—on his clumps of words, not on the phases of some wafty argument—and the conjoint virtue of having coined aphorisms as little suitable for ruminative mastication as so many bricks:

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> . . . the usual "poem", the commonplace opaque board covered with vain curlicues. . . .
>
> . . . the coining of similes is a pastime of very low order, depending as it does upon a merely vegetable coincidence. . . .
>
> . . . beauty . . . truth incompletely realized. . . . The beauty that clings to any really new work is beauty only in the minds of those who do not fully realize the significance. . . .

His best insights, like Mr. Eliot's, whom he admirably complements, coagulate into aphorisms; with this difference, that to qualify Williams' obiter dicta one needs a cold chisel, not a scalpel. He isn't adjusting his absolutes to existing frailty; by and large, he is talking about writing so good it hasn't been done yet. His knowledge of what it will be like if anyone succeeds in doing it sustains his intensity of statement. Aspects of this unwritten writing he discerns in the contemporary work that interests him, work which he subjects (amid tut-tuts from the glow-worms) to a scrutiny rigorous as an electric furnace. The writing of this half-century will not find a more tenacious reader. Where Mr. Pound reads his contemporaries to find out if they are alive, and Mr. Eliot to see if they merit introductions, Dr. Williams reads and rereads them to find out what they mean. He tells his young contemporaries the simple truth: that he has "a will to understand them that they will not find in many another".

"The goal of writing is to keep a beleaguered line of understanding which has movement from breaking down and becoming a hole into which we sink decoratively to rest". Hence the virtual non-existence of quotations in Williams' critical essays. He abhors the notion that the essential poetic *movement* can be represented by one or two of the points it traverses: as though a railway system were judged by its station architecture. This abhorrence sets him squarely against the tendency—not the principle—of nine-tenths of modern criticism: against the idea, originally a classroom strategy, that the poem is *in* a few of its detachable parts; that it consists of gems, for the sake of which it exists, united by neutral bits; that one ponders this image (what does it mean?), this image, and this image, and stops with a sum of images. The whole incorruptible bulk of Williams' critical achievement is dropped squarely athwart the beaten track of the ants.

It is not to be supposed that for details he substitutes "ideas".

> It is in the minutiae—in the minute organization of the words and their relationships in a composition that the seriousness and value of a work of writing exist—*not* in the sentiments, ideas, schemes portrayed.
>
> It is here, furthermore, that creation takes place. It is not a plaster of thought applied.

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His point is that instances of this "minute organization" can't be as readily detached from the whole composition's trajectory as we have been led to suppose. What takes place in a work of art is not an accumulation of beauties but "an alertness not to let go of a possibility of movement in our fearful bedazzlement with some concrete and fixed present".

Eschewing quotations, then, his method—which less skillful hands would be ill advised to imitate—is to exercise his inventive faculty and write a solid piece of prose which will serve as a sort of equivalent for "what this writer's work amounts to". This doesn't, in his practice, mean going back to Sainte-Beuve or Saintsbury. It means an intense concentration on the intentions implied by the subject, not on the urbanities of a public-relations job. Occasionally Williams thinks into the subject perfections probably not inherent in it; when he does this, as in the remarkable essay on Gertrude Stein, the result is not silliness but illumination not so much of Miss Stein as of the nature of writing. He notes, for instance, that:

> Music could easily have a statement attached to each note in the manner of words, so that C natural might mean the sun, etc., and completely dull treatises be played—and even sciences finally expounded in tunes.

Solid writing, however, tends to use the word "as reality" rather than "as symbol":

> Bach might be an illustration of movement not suborned by a freight of purposed design, loaded upon it as in almost all later musical works; statement unmusical and unnecessary. Stein's "they lived very gay then" has much of the same quality of movement to be found in Bach—the composition of the words determining not the logic, not the "story", not the theme even, but the movement itself. As it happens, "They were both gay there" is as good as some of Bach's shorter figures.

Stein is a laboratory example; turning his method to writing one willingly re-reads, Dr. Williams has produced, for instance, the only enlightening pages in print on Marianne Moore, and the meatiest comments on *A Draft of XXX Cantos* ever written. His ability to drive a spike with one blow helps single him out from the critics one wonders whether to take seriously or not. He writes when he knows what there is to be said, and conveys his gists without periphrasis. Of the Greek quotations in *The Cantos* ("knowing no Greek, I presume they mean something") he divines correctly, "They are no particular matter save that they say, There were other times like ours—at the back of it all." When the Ur-critics of *XXX Cantos* were fussing about Pound's pedantry or his aestheticism, Williams was staring hard at Pound's theme. Twenty-four years ago he defined it: "A closed mind which clings to its power—about which the intelligence beats seeking entrance": bullseye with one shot.

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Preoccupied not by the standards of traditional excellence with which Pound, to the confusion of most readers, retains contact, but by his own hard-won perception of the nature of a responsible modern American poet's job, Williams wasn't alarmed whenever Pound stopped imitating a Grecian nightingale. He was able to see the early Cantos as if the Van Buren and Adams sequences had already existed, classicism not an inert norm but a key-signature, one of several, controlling the movement of the poet's intelligence.

> It is beside the question in my opinion to speak of Pound's versification as carefully and accurately measured. . . . His excellence is that of the maker, not the measurer. . . .
>
> That is why he can include pieces of prose and have them still part of a *poem*. . . .

That is also, he might have added, why Pound could include pieces of "poetry". When *Eleven New Cantos* at length appeared, Williams had nothing to unsay:

> There is a good deal to say about money in this series, 9 per cent, thousands, millions of cash and the ways of men with it—to the exclusion of love. And love. . . .
>
> It is the poet who has digested the mass of impedimenta which the scholar thinks to solve by sinking up to his eyes in it and shouting that he has found it.

In the earlier Pound essay (1931) he noted,

> Pound's "faults" as a poet all center around his rancor against the malignant stupidity of a generation which polluted our rivers and would then, brightly, give ten or twenty or any imaginable number of millions of dollars as a fund toward the perpetuation of *Beauty*—in the form of a bequest to the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.
>
> "In America this crime has not been spread over a period of centuries, it has been done in the last twenty or twenty-five years, by a single generation, fifteen or twenty-five years older than I am, who have held power through that slobbery period."

This suggests the coordinates of Williams' rancor against "Beauty", his abnegation of poetic attempts to secure it and his suspicion of every proposal to endow it—expensive universities, for instance, "for the propagation of something that passes for the arts", which he consigns to the bottom of a list of amenities beginning with dog hospitals, canine cemeteries, and Palm Beach. "Beauty at its best seems truth incompletely realized"; and to use "beautiful" language "is to confess an inability to have penetrated with poetry some crevice of understanding; that special things and special places are reserved for art, that it is unable, that it requires fostering. This is unbearable."

What fascinates him about Marianne Moore is that while she is undeniably choosing the things she puts into her poems, the principle of choice has no

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relation to a notion of beauty inherent in the materials. "The baby glove of a Pharaoh can be so presented as to bring tears to the eyes," but Miss Moore doesn't deal in baby gloves (Williams is careful to say that her poems wouldn't *therefore* be bad if she did). What Miss Moore does deal in is actions, intellectual progressions, the mind moving freely "unencumbered by the images or the difficulties of thought. In such work there is no 'suggestiveness', no tiresome 'subtlety' of trend to be heavily followed, no painstaking refinement of sentiment". Sentiments are blocks of emotional stuff; the poet envisaged by Dr. Williams doesn't pause to refine what he encounters in transit, he passes through it like an X-ray. "A poem such as 'Marriage' is an anthology of transit. It is a pleasure that can be held firm only by moving rapidly from one thing to the next. It gives the impression of a passage through. There is a distaste for lingering, as in Emily Dickinson".

This is not only an admirable statement of Miss Moore's quality, it implies, once we remove the coloration of the particular example, a poetic of great interest. Though poems, for Dr. Williams, have a mode of being which differs from that of raw experience, they don't thereby inhabit a zone on the lower borders of the supernatural. Though the mystical quality "still seems to many the essence of poetry itself", poetry is a secular art, deriving its illuminations directly from the quality of the mind that has done the work. "There is a 'special' place where poems, as all works of art, must occupy, but it is quite definitely the same place as that where bricks or colored threads are handled". Since the poem is itself a force, it won't, while it remains chaste, incorporate objects by force. Though the characters, as Aristotle said, are included only for the sake of the action, we demand assurance that they are acting and not being pushed, and in the same way should demand images that aren't being conscripted. Again Miss Moore supplies the illustration: in her poems

> . . . an apple remains an apple whether it be in Eden or the fruit bowl. . . .
>
> "dazzled by the apple".
>
> The apple is left there, suspended. One is not made to feel that as an apple it has anything particularly to do with poetry or that as such it needs special treatment, one goes on. Because of this the direct object does seem unaffected . . . free from the smears of mystery. . . .

These remarks are as valuable as Mr. Eliot's on the metaphysical poets: which prompts the reflection that nine-tenths of Eliot's vastly influential criticism is concentrated in a dozen or so formulations, some of them dangerously succinct and memorable, that have started people thinking, and frequently been applied with clumsy enthusiasm to all sorts of locks they were never intended to open. The home-made quality of Dr. Williams' mental furnishings, if it wants ease, fends off glibness; it should be evident that his *Selected*

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Essays probably contains as many radioactive deposits as Mr. Eliot's book of the same title, and that they really are intended to be useful generalizations, not *ad hoc* formulations (like the famous sentence about the objective correlative) which some readers allow the pervasive urbaneness to invest with inappropriate universality. Critical books also contain outcroppings of less valuable minerals, and of these Williams probably offers a higher concentration per ton of rock fill than does his eminent rival. His remarkable essay on "The American Background", though not untinged with crankiness, should be required reading for anyone interested in American writing; Mr. Eliot on comparably panoramic topics (Humanism, for instance, or Modern Education and the Classics) is after twenty-odd years chiefly interesting to students of Mr. Eliot. The mind behind Williams' book is probably not less catholic, though certainly less urbane; to say that Matthew Arnold wouldn't have understood him is to bring out strength and weakness together. Against his impatience with much of the literary past one can weigh Eliot's rank incuriosity concerning the present. If Williams ignores Donne and is suspicious of Dante, Eliot was unable to say *why* he found Marianne Moore impressive, and wrote of *The Cantos* that Pound's belief that they meant something was sufficient for him. There can be no question of the one writer superseding the other. But we are not likely to find two valuable critics each so perfectly the other's complement.

HERBERT GOLD

Random Dreams, True and False[1]

WRITING NOVELS IS A WAY OF ASSERTING a degree of mastery over the world, and reading a group of novels for review can remind us of the variety of ways novelists have both to grasp and to evade the responsibility to deal fairly with our lives. Irony confronts—and then, abracadabra, avoids the requirement to judge; violence is the issue of tragedy—and a rending but trivial pretense at the whole thing; controlled form and a personal style are matters of intellectual and emotional self-respect—and a camouflage by manner of the flight before passion. Few novels dare to admit a full imagination of the possibilities of life. When a book does this, it is the truest witness of an age. When it does it most fully, it is the best witness for many ages.

[1]OUT WENT THE CANDLE, by *Harvey Swados*. Viking. $3.95. ALL MEN ARE MORTAL, by *Simone de Beauvoir*. World. $5.00. THE SIMPLE TRUTH, by *Elizabeth Hardwick*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50. A WORLD OF LOVE, by *Elizabeth Bowen*. Knopf. $3.50. SWAMI AND FRIENDS and THE BACHELOR OF ARTS, by *R. K. Narayan*. Michigan State College Press. $3.95. A GHOST AT NOON, by *Alberto Moravia*. Farrar and Straus. $3.50.

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At least one of these books represents the steady gaze, undaunted and rich in brute affection, which makes the novel the great artistic manifestation of the travail of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Others ring mostly false or thin—mechanical exercises or unhappy efforts to project an emotion clamoring unsuccessfully to be felt.

Harvey Swados, with *Out Went the Candle,* has written a first novel which would be a best seller if there were justice in such matters of commerce. Clearly and firmly written, with a rich grouping of character in contemporary America and a paced and exciting story, it would seem to have elements of popular appeal. Where it differs from the typical slick, semi-serious, or semi-demi-serious novel which traditionally hits the jackpot (sometimes good ones do, also) is in the quality of its seriousness—a steady sympathy and care for people which obliges in return a courage and a willingness to share passion. The book is one which demands, past its elements of sensation, a sense of pride in the best possibilities of people tried by the worst of commercial civilization.

The story concerns a group of people centered about Herman Felton, a cranky, hustling, sentimental smalltime business operator who builds a rickety empire in wartime manipulations and comes crashing down under a combination of exterior attack (congressional investigations) and his own "frailty" (his love for his son claims energies he needs for doing battle with his enemies). Swados was lured by Felton's daughter, Betsy, into giving her the most space in the narrative, but Herman Felton is clearly the dynamic figure of the novel. Betsy, borne by her love affairs, also spins to ruin; her adventures are moving and her plight is recognizable, that of the modern woman who makes unfulfillable demands on love. Swados' compassion for her pathetic egotism is unfaked, although melodrama tempts the reader to take his distance from Betsy.

Heard especially through the voice of Joe Burley, one of those contemplative journalists who in fictions are always cynical, loyal, and dryly wise, Swados seems to attribute her ruin to ambivalence toward her father—a congeries of love, hate, desire, the usual Freudian stew. But his imagination is too good to dramatize her so simply, and the sense of a woman competing in a world which men make for goals which men define—and yet trying to remain a woman—is painfully sharp.

Swados also attributes Joe Burley's inability to commit himself to Betsy as a lover to the discovery that Burley's mother once had a trifling affair with Betsy's father, thus making them psychic siblings. To this, quoting Elizabeth Bowen, we say nuts. There were good and individual reasons for their failure to come together—and Swados projects them in dramatic incident—so that Freud only bores holes in cheese already well perforated.

On the other hand, the relationship between the fatherless Presbyterian, Joe, and Betsy's intense Jewish father is finely felt and discreetly communicated, with no intrusion by the echoes of Freud and Stephen Dedalus.

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While many of the characters have the satisfying reality of flesh, it is the old boy, Herman Felton, with all his excess of ambition, his pleasure in combat and his sly and sentimental palaver, who becomes a memorable personage in the world of the contemporary novel. A variety of scene—a grubby office in the garment district, a Jersey house, a smart Manhattan nightclub at midday, a freighter in a convoy, London, and the banana republic to which Felton flees —is given vitality by his presence. Swados presents his moral exhortations about "the happy medium", "avoiding pitfalls", and "having the joy of my family", cunningly, with wit, and with a love that grows as the unifying element in many alterations. Herman Felton is a man who has what he needs to be happy; but able to possess what he has, he is driven to use his energies to destroy himself. All the complexity of a potentiality for joy and an actual misery is communicated with a great but hard tenderness—hard because Swados does not permit the tenderness to get in the way of unsparing judgment.

Occasionally committing gaucheries of plotting or writing (are not the best stories the ones which risk excess?), Swados has succeeded with this first novel in satisfying the most important need for which we go to fictions. He communicates a powerful sense of human individuals, deeply flawed yet retaining their dignity, willing and striving on earth to find love and thereby to defeat death.

Simone de Beauvoir is a shrill and clever lady who had some shrewd, wrong-headed things to say about the plight of Woman in *The Second Sex*. That long essay read like a woeful novel, and one could respect the intensity of her resentment. Her newly-translated book, *All Men Are Morial,* is a novel that reads in part like a dull essay and in part like a parody of George Sylvester Viereck's *My First Two Thousand Years*. Emulating that classic of rococo pornography, Mme. de Beauvoir tells of a man who lives a long long time and is always *there*. If there's a battle to be won, le voila! And especially, of course, if there's a bed or a pair of lips to be bubbled over with prose for page upon page.

It should be noted that, while the novel contains some drearily "existentialist" philosophizing, the vitality of the Existentialist thinkers in France is not to be measured by this opportunistic dredging up of a weary exercise. The best moments to be spent with *All Men Are Mortal* come from the jacket, which ripples on tirelessly about "one of the strangest novels ever to be put on paper, written by a woman who has ventured far beyond the well-traversed fields of other writers. . . . Keen mind and boundless imagination. . . . Life's most profound mystery and the soul's most instinctive desire. . . ." What is there to be discovered in her poorly-traversed fields?

The murder trial supplies a staple product. Somewhat in the manner of one of those "sensitive" French films, Elizabeth Hardwick in *The Simple Truth* takes for subject the ambiguities and secret desires, the ambivalence of passion

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in spectators. Her prose, crisp as celery, with a fiber of irony depending on the stringy use of adjectives and qualifiers, is suited to the theme of this brief and modest work. It is an entertaining psychological suspense story despite its dust jacket's claims to look for "a workable concept of justice". (Novelists' friends often do the steady craftsman an injustice in evoking the standards of literature.)

College boy apparently murders sweetheart in his room. Trial. Chief observers: a student on the GI bill, willing to forgive the killer because he sees an issue of class conflict; faculty wife, intense and "interesting", eager to forgive the killer because . . . because . . . Well, Freud, Jung, universal guilt, "psychology" again. Other principal: The GI student's wife, going through crucial adjustment to marriage. Surprise ending which can be repeated because it is not such a surprise. The girl died accidentally.

The story is therefore a joke, with the chief joke on the superheated defenders of the boy on trial. So he really didn't do it! And they *thought* he did it, but wanted to forgive him! These nice people are actually disappointed—what a revelation! The central characters are thus doomed to search and discover themselves as not being islands, entire of themselves; but of course Miss Hardwick is too intelligent to make the discovery for them: therefore they don't make it.

The simple truth seems to be that a chance for passion has gone out of their lives with the revelation that the boy wasn't really a lover jealous enough to kill. They settle back. The veteran's wife Doris, who works in the library, will have to quit her job because Mr. Emersen (with an "e"), "brittle as a matchstick", "dry and withdrawn", but with "impudent eyes", has put his hand on her breast—and all she felt was a calculating pride. Poor husband! Poor Doris!

The quality of Miss Hardwick's cool, shrewd, somewhat primping language at its best is given by a description of the faculty wife: "She was a woman of fine intelligence and small ambition. This wormy combination, never in the spirit's best interests, gnawed at her nerves but did not invade her virtue". Nice, enough, but somewhat abstract. Miss Hardwick is sparing of physical details, although her eye is sharp. The story is engrossing, one of those "deceptively thin" tales that you are supposed to think about, but then, upon reflection, turn out to be as thin and contrived as they first seemed.

Fussy, fussy, fussy is *A World of Love:* Elizabeth Bowen is also elegant, of course. What happens happens in a dream world of half-felt feelings and half-precise words, draped in a mist of self-induced poesy. The steaming, creaking, moldering Irish country house, the ghost of a dead lover, the precociously tender woman—a girl at the edge of love—and the precocious infantile monster (rival sister), the steady ox of a man (but with feelings!) who came to replace the dead Guy, gone at war. . . . The machinery is ready and gassed up. At the

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end, the "wonderful golden willow of a girl . . . like a boy actor in woman's clothes. . . . what was classical in her grace made her appear to belong to another time" meets boy (not much description wasted on him) and: "They no sooner looked but they loved."

Here is another story of incestuous wishes, hidden letters, memory, dead lovers, decaying mansions, peopled by faces such as the one "perfectly ready to be a woman's, but not yet so, even in its transcendency this morning", and prosed by such abstract constructions as "unforeseeingness", "missingness", and "uncaringness". A place is a "magic oasis", a girl is a "golden willow", the questions are monumental: "*Was* she—did she exist?"—and expressed with ineffableness and italicness.

Occasionally a sharp word or phrase crackles like busy petticoats through all the sighing and mooning, and then the book breaks to life. After a dawdling, contrived, vain playing with words, someone says, "Nuts!" and the reader says Jeez. Occasionally there is even an aristocratic irreverence of humor, as in the words of the monster child about her father: "His word ought to have been law, so I have very often obeyed him." The fissureless patching of rhetoric, indisputably Elizabeth Bowen at every instant and all of a piece, compels admiration, even when she makes the weather infallibly prefigure the mood, just like Taylor Caldwell. If only the rustling and appearance of movement made a stir capable of doing more than creasing the skin of prose, and if the world of love which Miss Bowen wishes to dream of were to be populated by real hallucinations instead of the quirky simulacra of passion which satisfy her in this work, then the novel might move toward its high ambitions: to be a history of the striving for love in the sight of time and death. Alas, however:

> Her sunny outward "finish," work of Antonia, had been but a certain giving of grace to the girl's not having of what she had not—behind all lay a misgiving, an ineptitude. Now she tried to think, as a form of moral endeavour, but had to perceive that she never could, or, if she desired to be herself, never must.

Unfortunately, Miss Bowen's vision here is thrice removed from the career of life, a mere whisper of shadows in a fine Knopf job of bookmaking, females busy spoiling in their very own poynton. Let this incredible sentence be its epitaph: "Ill met had Guy been by the ballroom-blue moonlight of Maidenhead." Perhaps not many other guys have noticed that strange glow.

There is space for only brief notice of two other writers. R. K. Narayan is an Indian writer whose two novellas *Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*, published in one volume, speak for a writer of delicacy, irony and purpose. These works, minor in intent, are insufficient clue to the importance of his talent, but indicate at least that his other novels are to be read. Particularly *The Bachelor of Arts*, depicting the crisis of late adolescence, brings a calm humor to this familiar material for novelists, making it special in other

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ways than its locale, a provincial Indian town, and its social material, the religious, caste, job, and racial tensions of upper class Indian life.

Alberto Moravia's *A Ghost at Noon* reviews the virtues, the faults, and the stiffly posturing conflicts of this prolific Italian writer's many popular earlier books. He is equipped with a narrative gift, an intensely pessimistic view of human nature (which he communicates dramatically), and a novelistic eye for detail, irrelevance, all the dirt of life in society. Unfortunately, each book repeats the earlier ones; his few strong concerns (impotence, isolation, universal egotism) are static and obsessive; he cynically repeats the same description of the sexual act (combative, fearful, arid, toiling) in almost every short story and several times in each novel. Unfortunately coitus, no matter how special and how well described technically, cannot carry the burden of aspiration and failure for all the novelist's personae.

Of course, just as loveless love may produce children, so Moravia's passion for passion has shocked some of his books and stories into life. This novel has some interesting details—chiefly an Italian movie producer who wants to do the Hollywood biblical extravaganza in "latin" version, the Odyssey complete with gongs, slaves, tortures, bracelet-rattling dancing, and a Victor Mature as Odysseus if possible—but essentially it covers one of the several old Moravia beats. Ingeniously suffering weakling and placidly erotic woman make trouble for each other, heating up the pages with lonely lubricity.

Read Swados.

GERALD WEALES

Up to Date on Arthur

THE INVISIBLE WRITING, by *Arthur Koestler*. Macmillan. $5.00.

THE MOST OBVIOUS FACT ABOUT ARTHUR KOESTLER IS his immense pomposity; the most comforting is his realization of it. He is only half kidding, however, when he uses as an epigraph to one section of *The Invisible Writing* Christopher Fry's lovely sentence, "I apologize/For boasting, but once you know my qualities/I can drop back into a quite brilliant/Humility. . ." Respect for one's own brilliance and sensitivity is endemic among writers, of course, but few of them parade it with the many-volumed insistence that is the mark of Koestler. It is not simply this preoccupation with self that becomes tiresome, for, after all, self is the legitimate concern of any autobiographer. It is, rather, the heavy-handed analysis, political and psychological, that he brings

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to any event, however minor; the strident metaphors, represented by the arrow of *Arrow in the Blue,* the general title of the autobiography and the specific title of volume one; and the reiteration of his own typicality that finally make the reader impatient. He is a good reporter when he wants to be. One wants to shake him up and say, as Charlie McCarthy used to say to his voice, "Just tell it, Bergen."

There is much to tell, too. *The Invisible Writing* covers roughly a decade, from Koestler's entrance into the Communist Party in Berlin in 1932, actually described in *Arrow in the Blue,* to his escape from fallen France to England in 1940; an epilogue brings us up to date. The early chapters of the book, mostly a repetition from Koestler's essay in *The God That Failed,* describe party activities in Berlin in the early years of the Nazis; first from his position as foreign editor of *B. Z. Am Mittag* and science adviser to the Ullstein Trust, where he also served as secret, if ineffectual, passer of information to the party, and then, after he had been fired from the Ullstein jobs, from within a cell. There is a great expansion of the material on his trip to the Soviet Union in 1932, which filled just a few pages of *The God That Failed.* Since his Communist membership was still a secret at the time, he made this trip ostensibly as a bourgeois reporter who was to return starry-eyed at the new wonders with a report to the world; the only result was a book, *Red Days and White Nights,* which was published in German in the Ukraine. Although there are individual good things in this section—including the one really funny passage in this volume (there are several in *Arrow in the Blue,* although comedy is plainly not Koestler's business), an anecdote of a four-day train journey during which he shared a sleeping-car compartment with a preposterous comrade, Vera Maximovna—the account of his visit to Russia is disappointing. He is apparently attempting to do some objective reporting on what he never saw objectively, which involves re-sorting his impressions twenty years afterward, and at the same time he is trying to recreate the feelings that he had at the time; as a result the description becomes wonderfully amorphous, except when he is dealing with specific people whom he came to know more than casually. The events that fill the center of the book, that cover the years from 1933 to 1936, are—like those in *Arrow in the Blue*—most interesting, probably because Koestler has dished up little of this part of his life before; during this period he was a kind of literary tramp, in Paris, Budapest, Zurich, keeping alive by writing a series of sex books and by doing innumerable odd jobs for the party. At the end of the volume he telescopes his experience as a reporter and as a prisoner of Franco's forces during the Spanish Civil War and greatly abridges the account of his imprisonment in and escape from France in the early years of World War II, trying to keep from repeating too much that has already appeared in *Dialogue With Death* and *Scum of the Earth,* autobiographical volumes that treat those periods in greater detail.

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This is the simple itinerary of his decade's journey, but he has built on it a top-heavy framework that obscures as often as it elucidates. He has carried over, for instance, the metaphorical signboards of the first volume; he still follows the arrow, which is variously a faith, a crusade and a perfect woman, and the arrow is still split, one half following the road of action, the other the road of contemplation. He brings with him, too, the concepts of Ahor and Babo, his own metaphysical shorthand for an unidentifiable horror (Archaic Horror) and for the ability to free himself from it (the Baron of the bog, from the *Tales of Munchausen*, who lifted himself out of the bog by his own hair). Then, of course, there is the new invisible writing, which he can only see in occasional, imperfect flashes, the way T. S. Eliot grasps his definition of culture, but which is charting his course through these years. Even more oppressive than all of this apparatus is the excess of self-analysis which robs many of the events that he describes of any immediate meaning. There is an endless parade of anxiety-neuroses, guilt-feelings, inferiority complexes and traumas. All of this *ex post facto* discovery of significances tells us more of the Arthur Koestler working over *The Invisible Writing* than it does of the one who lived the experiences that it deals with. This psychologizing tendency reaches a fantastic climax when, twenty years later, he analyses a "significant dream" which he had one night in Orchonikidse on the edge of the Caucasus, a dream which was apparently an unconscious presage of his break with the party, although

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this lay six years in the future, and at the same time "the unconscious fear of losing faith in Russia and the Communist ideal".

Koestler's avowed intention in writing this autobiography is to show the odyssey of a typical European intellectual, one whose journey is so heavy with confusion that he himself can hardly tell how he got from the point of departure—the joining of the party—to the point of arrival—the break with it. Yet the journey can become significant to the reader only if the author can recreate his state of mind at each step along the way. Koestler is best when he is describing the people with whom he worked and played and the operations in which he took part, but he falls short of communicating the reality of his relationship either to person or cause. He substitutes instead the elaborate explanations described above as definitions for moments of which the essence was plainly that they could not be defined. Since he cannot take us on his journey, either because he is not artist enough to recreate it for us or because he cannot recreate it for himself, he accepts the second best and tells us that he has been on it. In doing so, he manages to stroll down most of the psychological, philosophical, metaphysical and scientific by-ways that have been popular in the last twenty-five years. It is the old contemplative half of the arrow over-operating. He has always been given to such idea-ridden side trips, but in *Dialogue With Death* and *Scum of the Earth*, for instance, the cerebrations have an immediacy that make them part of the general experience; in the autobiography they tend to become excretions added as a kind of monumental afterthought.

Even in the direct consideration of party politics a kind of double think operates. He always discusses party policies in the light of later history, so that we are never sure how little or how much he knew at the time, to what degree his dialectic had to operate as a form of self-deception. There is much fascinating material, particularly about the operations of Willy Muenzenberg and Otto Katz in relation to the anti-Fascist, pro-loyalist committees and publications of the thirties, but throughout this part of the book there is a kind of running cluck-cluck from Koestler at the naiveté of the innocents who were enlisted in such causes, although the origin of the cluck—whether it comes from the Communist who knew things from the inside at the time or the anti-Communist who knows from history now—is never clear. He admits in this volume that it is almost impossible for an ex-Communist to convince anyone of the fervor that led him to the party and that later sent him away from it; he now considers that his essay in *The God That Failed* was not successful in its attempt to explain. It was, in fact, much more successful than the longer autobiography; for the emphasis is so scattered in *The Invisible Writing* that one often feels that Koestler's connection with the party is little more than that of observer. We can understand more of the allegiance that held him to the party in *Dialogue With Death*, in which his party membership is

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hidden and in which there are already the signs of the break that will come, and we know more of his disgust with the party from *Scum of the Earth* or from the novels.

The more that Koestler insists on the special significance of his autobiography, the more we suspect that here simply is a man who likes to talk about himself and who feels that he must have a socially important reason for doing so. He is not even as typical as he insists that he is. Because he was Arthur Koestler late of the Ullstein Trust he was allowed to see a lot of the Soviet Union; because he was Arthur Koestler of the *News Chronicle* he was saved from the prison in Spain; because he was Arthur Koestler with friends in England he was released from the French concentration camp at Le Vernet. He is even atypical, as he so often says, in that he survived when so many of the people that he knew were killed by the Nazis, the Communists or the despair that settled over Europe in the late thirties. Koestler cannot even let the horrifying list of the dead speak for itself, he must add a touch of the bogus, by inserting bits such as this end to a description of a revolutionary hero, an old man whom he met in Bokhara: "I don't know what has happened to Hadji Mir Baba since, and I prefer not to know." Such wilful muddying of water already made filthy by events gives to the whole biography a portentous air that sometimes rings false.

Arthur Koestler's story is essentially that of a romantic. It was with a flourish that he threw up his engineering education to become a Zionist and with the same kind of flourish that he wrecked his career as a successful jour-

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF The Hudson Review, published quarterly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1954.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, The Hudson Review, Inc., 439 West Street, New York 14, N. Y.; Editors, William Arrowsmith, Joseph Bennett and Frederick Morgan; Managing editor, Lisa Dyer, all same address.

2. The owner is: The Hudson Review, Inc., 439 West Street, New York 14, N. Y., a New York membership corporation not authorized to issue stock, whose members are: Joseph Bennett, Constance Morgan and Frederick Morgan, all same address.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

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LISA DYER, Managing Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1954.

WILLIAM G. NIBLETTE

(My commission expires March 30, 1956.)

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nalist to become a Communist. He was neither a good Zionist nor a good Communist, largely because they are basically unromantic disciplines. He celebrates the "blessings of unreason" which seem always to operate when important changes take place in his life, but he admires too the rationalistic world in which his mind operates between messages from the invisible writing. Like a good romantic, he is as much in love with his moments of despair as he is with his moments of joy, and he is inordinately preoccupied with his sexual adventures. This cocky little man, over-impressed with his own virtues and his own vices, happened to be intimately connected with a great many of the major events of recent history. In telling his story, he has bemused himself into believing that he is a kind of Everyman through whom it is possible to read modern history more clearly. Yet he has only occasionally brought clarity, and he has cluttered up what should have been, considering what has happened to him, a fascinating autobiography. In trying to underline the spiritual and political significance of his life, instead of letting the life speak for itself, he has succeeded mainly in stuffing his shirt.

A COMMUNICATION

Dear Sirs,

Miss Rudikoff in your Winter 1955 issue taxes me with ignoring "the very point of a science, which is that laws are not contingent upon the character of the discoverer". I should be the first to agree that Newton's laws, say, were probably not contingent on the character of Newton, regardless of the extent to which they were shaped by what a 17th century mathematician would have expected to find. But the analogy between psychoanalysis and physics or chemistry or even biology seems to me more imperfect than Miss Rudikoff appears to imply. For one thing, the explorer of personality and of the unconscious literally does not know *what* it is that he is talking about; for another thing, as Miss Rudikoff goes on to suggest, the very existence of psychoanalytic doctrine has itself altered the nature of the phenomena it is concerned with: as though apples had taken to reading the *Principia* and modified their way of falling out of self-consciousness. So I must decline to spring into a posture of respect at the introduction of the word "science" into a discussion of psychoanalysis, until it is made clear with what degree of metaphoric extension the word is being applied.

HUGH KENNER

Santa Barbara, California

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